

JOHN KEBLE'S

LITERARY AND RELIGIOUS CONTRIBUTION
TO THE
OXFORD MOVEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

It is generally admitted that John Keble was one of the three great leaders of the Oxford Movement. This movement must be looked upon as a form, that is to say the specific English form, of the struggle between faith and liberalism that was fought throughout Western Europe in the nineteenth century.

While the immense number of books on the subject makes it possible for the reader to get a fairly adequate idea of the personalities of Newman and Pusey and their shares in the religious revival in the Anglican Church, this is by no means the case with Keble.

It is true, most books on the Oxford Movement give the main facts of his life. He is praised for his spiritual ideals, his personal devotion, his humility and asceticism, his childlike simplicity and artistic sensitiveness. His volume of poetry, the well-known *Christian Year*, is mentioned as foreshadowing the approach of the movement, but for the rest there is all but silence.

Speaking about Keble and Tractarianism, Newman observed in his *Apologia pro vita sua* that "the true and primary author of it, . . . as is usual with great motive powers, was out of sight" ¹⁾. Must this striking statement be taken as an exaggeration due to Newman's lifelong feelings of friendship and respect ²⁾ for Keble, or is it to be taken at its face-value, so that we must conclude that Keble actually deserves to be called the originator of the Movement? Besides, there is the often quoted saying of Richard Hurrell Froude, "If I was ever asked what good I have ever done, I should say I had brought Keble and Newman to understand each other" ³⁾. Referring to the harmonious working of these three widely different minds, R.W. Church said about Froude

¹⁾ J. H. NEWMAN, *Apologia*, Longmans, London 1865, p. 17.

²⁾ Keble's reputation in the Oxford of the early twenties may be gathered from the words Newman used to describe his feelings when he received the congratulations of the Fellows of Oriel College after his election to a Fellowship of that College. "I bore it", he says, "till Keble took my hand, and then felt so abashed and unworthy of the honour done me, that I seemed desirous of quite sinking into the ground". *Apologia*, p. 17.

³⁾ R. H. FROUDE, *Remains*, ed. Rivington, London 1838, vol. i, p. 438.

that he had accepted Keble's teaching with enthusiasm and "brought to bear upon Newman's mind, at a critical period of his development, Keble's ideas and feelings about religion and the Church, Keble's reality of thought and purpose, Keble's transparent and saintly simplicity..."⁴).

What exactly were these ideas and feelings of Keble? What was it that made his influence so great, although he purposely kept in the background? How well-known he was may be evidenced by his large correspondence as a spiritual adviser and by the fact that in the first few weeks after his death there appeared obituaries in as many as thirty papers and periodicals⁵).

The existing biographies hardly touch on such questions. Among them, the one by Keble's friend Sir J. T. Coleridge, and another by Walter Lock, sub-warden of Keble College towards the end of the nineteenth century, are the most extensive, though typically Victorian, accounts of Keble's life⁶). The most valuable part of Coleridge's work is formed by the great number of letters which are published there for the first time. The information contained in them may be supplemented from the very useful volume of correspondence edited and published by the fathers of the Birmingham Oratory⁷).

Then there are three recent publications on Keble. One cannot admit, however, that they have led to a deeper understanding of his position. On the contrary, I think serious objections should be raised against the way in which they have interpreted Keble's ideas and aspirations. First there is the book by Kenneth Ingram⁸). The author adduces Keble's staunch loyalty to the Church of England, in its combination with the great toleration Keble showed towards other denominations, as a proof of his being one of the first advocates of a liberal-minded Catholicism. He admits that Keble himself was unconscious of this and that liberalism was even 'utter anathema' to him⁹). All the same, he concludes that "it is to Keble that we owe the fact that the way to a truly English [which is the same as liberal in the author's opinion] Catholicism still lies open"¹⁰). Mr. Ingram justifies this conclusion by saying that Keble

⁴) R. W. CHURCH, *The Oxford Movement*, London 1892, p. 31.

⁵) Preserved in Keble College Library.

⁶) J. T. COLERIDGE, *A Memoir of the Rev. J. Keble, M.A.*, 1st ed., Oxford and London 1869, 2 vols. — W. LOCK, *John Keble, a Biography*, 1st ed., London 1892.

⁷) *Correspondence of J. H. Newman with John Keble and others, 1839-1849*, edited at the Birmingham Oratory, London 1917.

⁸) KENNETH INGRAM, *John Keble*, The Tractarian Series, London 1933.

⁹) id., p. 128.

¹⁰) id., p. 181.

was convinced that "Catholicism can legitimately possess an Anglican as well as a Roman form, although he would have suspected such individual liberal Catholic declarations as were set forth in *Lux Mundi* and later in *Essays Catholic and Critical*" ¹¹). The writer evidently ignored the fact that Keble strongly defended the principle of authority as embodied in the Tradition of the Church Universal. If Keble was convinced that Catholicism can possess various forms, this conviction of his was based on the assumption that both the Anglican and the Roman Church were living branches of the one Catholic Church. Mr. Ingram is, indeed, stretching historical truth too far when he maintains that Keble as well as Pusey were fighting the Erastian principle much more than any latitudinarian liberalism ¹²). The liberal attitude of the State was the very cause of their objections to the Erastian principle.

In his excellent book dealing with the development of romantic critical theory, entitled *The Mirror and the Lamp*, Mr. Abrams also discusses Keble's *Lectures on Poetry*. He has discovered a parallelism between the poetic theories of Keble and Freud in them, their common thesis being that poetry is the imagined fulfilment of ungratified personal desire. So far one may agree with the author, though I do not think Keble would have approved of the words 'imagined fulfilment'. Then, however, the writer goes on to conclude that this parallelism "may be taken as one more evidence of the extent to which psycho-analysis is a secularized version of religious belief and ritual" ¹³). There is no reason to doubt Mr. Abrams' sincerity, but this is, to say the least of it, a misleading remark when made with reference to Keble's view of the relation between religion and poetry. The writer has probably overlooked an essential element in Keble's attitude towards life in general. Keble regarded life as one inseparable whole, so that it was quite natural to him that art and religion should run parallel courses, all human activities having God for their final object. Viewed in this light, poetry was to Keble something akin to religion, a *kind of* sacrament. If Keble transferred ideas from the religious sphere to poetry, it was only to show his unbelieving contemporaries that there is an analogical parallel between the two. He taught them that experience of the 'healing function' of poetry might be used as a means to the believing acceptance

¹¹) KENNETH INGRAM, *op. cit.*, p. 177. *Lux Mundi* (1889) and *Essays Catholic and Critical* (1926) represent the liberal movement of theological thought in the Anglican Church.

¹²) KENNETH INGRAM, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

¹³) M. H. ABRAMS, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, The Norton Library, New York 1958.

of the workings of sacramental grace. Keble never intended to suggest that religion was to him something like a supernatural compensation of frustrated natural desires.

In another recent publication, namely in Mr. A. Cockshut's *Anglican Attitudes*¹⁴), Keble's idea of Church unity is misinterpreted. The book gives an analysis of the respective attitudes of Newman, Pusey and Keble towards the very intricate question of Church authority. I think the author misrepresents Keble's oecumenical attitude, when he asserts that to Keble the idea of a universal Church was something that had to be fitted into the Anglican system. Most probably, Mr. Cockshut's conclusion is mainly due to a passage occurring in Keble's preface to his volume of *Academical and Occasional Sermons*, in which he intimated that the hope of Church unity would become larger if the principles of the Anglican Church, especially its constant reference to primitive Antiquity, were more generally accepted. Indeed, Keble was convinced that of the three branches the Anglican Church had preserved the original principles of the Ancient Church in the purest form. He was, however, much too humbly conscious of what he used to call 'the realities of one's probation in this world' not to admit that in many respects the Church of England had wandered away from the principles of the original Church system. The Church unity he looked to was a supernatural or mystical unity founded on sacramental grace as the source of inward personal holiness. He believed that in his Church there were to be found as many — if not more — examples of this holiness as in the Church of Rome. His idea of a universal Church was something that could only be fitted into the system of the uncorrupted Ancient Church.

From the above it will be clear that Keble's ideas still give occasion to fundamentally divergent interpretations. Matters of principle are still left in complete darkness because a comprehensive study of his life and activities is still wanting. The unpublished material preserved in several Oxford Colleges, especially in Keble College and Pusey House, may be expected to throw a welcome light on many important details in this connection.

In writing this essay I have made use of all the published works of Keble as well as of the greater part of the collection of letters, notes and newspaper-cuttings to be found in Keble College Library.

I have set myself the task of distilling from this material Keble's fun-

¹⁴) A. COCKSHUT, *Anglican Attitudes*, London 1959.

damental ideas, convinced as I am that it is these ideas which have contributed to making him a motive power in the Oxford Movement, an inspiring personality behind the scenes. In doing so, I hope to have traced some of the present-day results of nineteenth century Tractarianism to one of their chief sources. Thus, my work may help to accentuate the continuity of that particular thread in the history of the Anglican Church which connects Anglo-Catholicism with the Oxford Movement, and runs *via* the Caroline Divines and Richard Hooker, beyond the English Reformation, to the Catholic Church of the first few centuries. The close relation between the 'Word' and the 'sacramental symbol', the subject which forms the centre of all Keble's teachings, has again come to the front in the latest oecumenical discussions.

The fact that Keble firmly believed in the adherence of his Church to the principles of the Ancient Church, and that he devoted his whole life to the defence of its position in between Rome and 'Protestantism', may give rise to the expectation that a substantial part of the following essay will be taken up by a comparison of these forms of Christianity. Of course, Keble's attitude towards the Reformation will have to be dealt with, but any comparison between Anglicanism and Catholicism is deliberately avoided. I think that a religious phenomenon like Anglicanism may best be studied in its own terms, and besides, a comparison, if at all fruitful, would necessarily require a great knowledge of theology and religious practice, fields in which I am at best an amateur and a novice.

Something must be said here in elucidation of Keble's use of the term 'Protestant'. He did not approve of it and would have preferred the name of 'appellant' for those who, like the Church of England, had separated themselves from the Church of Rome in the sixteenth century without having the intention of schism. According to his interpretation of the term, 'Protestant' implied the 'paramount authority of Rome', protesting being the course of persons who know no legal remedy for their grievance. By calling themselves 'appellants' — derived from 'to appeal to an oecumenical Council' — such persons intimate that Rome itself is also under the authority of the Universal Church. An appeal assumes that there is a grievance, but it also supposes a 'constitutional corrective'. "A protest in any juridical matter supposes the final authority to have spoken; an appeal supposes the contrary" ¹⁵).

Whenever Keble uses the word 'Protestant' in a pejorative sense, the

¹⁵) KEBLE, *On Eucharistical Adoration*, 3rd ed., Oxford 1867, p. 176.

term is synonymous with 'liberal', 'rationalist' or 'puritan'. He applies it to such Churchmen as show leanings to 'Genevan profaneness'¹⁶). They deny the indispensability of the Apostolic Succession and consider the Sacraments as 'mere signs of edification and comfort'. Faith is to them 'a matter of feeling rather than a strict relative duty towards the Persons of the Holy Trinity'¹⁷). He thought it would be 'most unwise' and 'most unkind' to speak of such religious bodies as if they could be sure of a full inheritance of sacramental grace¹⁸). He imputed their aversion to the mysterious element in religion and their contempt of the spiritual privileges of the Church to the rationalization of religious faith.

Keble's reaction against the rationalistic spirit of his age may no doubt be partly attributed to the romantic traits in his character. This admission must, however, not be mistaken for a suggestion that the Oxford Movement might be qualified as a religious offshoot of literary romanticism. He welcomed the romantic poetry of Wordsworth because it taught people to recognize the importance of the irrational and the mysterious in life, and because it pointed to the close relation between man and his natural surroundings. It started from a unified view of reality, which was, in Keble's opinion, the only safeguard against the disintegrating effects of rationalism. Because of these qualities, he thought the new school of poetry might help to prepare the way for a religious revival.

A few words may be added here about the plan of this essay. After a description of the qualities of Keble's character which determined his outlook on life, there follows a brief summary of the main currents of thought with which he had to contend in his defence of the Church of England as a living branch of the Universal Church. The third chapter deals with the content of the term 'moral sense' which Keble used, in opposition to 'reason', to denote the faculty bestowed on man to attain knowledge about reality. This leads up to a description of the analogy between poetry and religion, implying the contrast between 'poetic' and 'rationalistic'. The fifth chapter contains his vindication of the symbolism of the early Fathers as the only right way of approaching reality and of appreciating the function of the Sacraments. Then Keble's views of the various Sacraments are collected in order to show that it was his aim

¹⁶) KEBLE, *Tract* 57, p. 11.

¹⁷) id., p. 11.

¹⁸) KEBLE, *Sermons Academical and Occasional*, s. vii, p. 166. cf. KEBLE, *Tract* 57, p. 9.

to give a new prominence to sacramental grace in the spiritual life of his Church. The last chapter gives his ideas of the Anglican position, explaining at the same time why he remained a member of the Church of England.

My thanks are due to Dr. Carpenter, Warden of Keble College, for placing the unpublished material preserved in the Library of Keble College so kindly at my disposal, and to several members of the staff of the Bodleian Library for their skilful assistance. I am very grateful to the publishers, especially to Messrs. Parker, Oxford, for their permission to use many quotations from their books.

CHAPTER I

JOHN KEBLE, THE MAN, AND HIS CONCEPTION OF LIFE

In the development of the Oxford Movement there are clearly two diverging currents. They both sprang from the same fundamental idea that the Anglican Church is a living branch of the Church Universal. The leader of the progressive section, John Henry Newman, put himself on an intellectual basis in his solitary but energetic and incessant quest for the principles underlying objective truth. Following his sense of reality with unswerving consistency, and under the stress of outward circumstances, he at last saw it as an unbearable inconsistency to stay in the Church of England. He then found himself confronted with the painful inevitability of the decisive step which took him to Rome. Much attention has since been paid to Newman and his separation from Anglicanism. Much less attention has been given to the leader of the regressive section, John Keble. He was a totally different sort of man, and, owing to his nature, a much less brilliant and spectacular figure. Being one of the recognized leaders of the Oxford Movement, he is often mentioned in one breath with Newman and Pusey, although hardly any of the writers of the many books on the Movement succeeded in setting off those qualities in the man which may account for the important place that is obviously due to him ¹). There are a few biographies of the Victorian type and several appreciative criticisms of Keble's poetry by enthusiastic admirers. In the more detailed histories of English Literature his name is included because he was the author of a successful collection of religious poetry, *The Christian Year*, which is not infrequently and not unjustly regarded as a poetic preliminary to the Oxford Movement. All this, however, does not make it any clearer what it was that caused men like Newman, Hurrell Froude and Isaac Williams openly to declare that their contact with Keble meant a definite turning-point in their lives.

¹) An exception must be made for the splendid little book by CHRISTOPHER DAWSON, *The Spirit of the Oxford Movement*, London 1945. See especially ch. i and ii.

In this and the following chapters, an attempt will be made to throw more light on this question, first by describing the singleness of spiritual vision which was so characteristic of him, later on by working out the fundamental views on which his conception of life was based. It will appear that it was rather his whole personality, his great qualities of character than his writings that gave him such a far-reaching influence over the spiritual imagination and affections of so many people.

In one of his contributions to *Lyra Apostolica*²), entitled 'The Churchman to his Lamp', Keble apostrophizes the burning lamp in his study, saying:

Come, light me on a little space,
The heavenly vision to retrace,
By Saints and Angels loved so well —
My Mother's glories ere she fell.

He complains that, instead of watching and fasting, weeping and praying that the enemies of the Church may be beaten off, people feast and slumber on, and say "Why pine o'er evil done?" Only very few churchmen "slowly climb the steep of faith's triumphant prime". Still, helped by God's grace, he will fight on.

I trim thee, precious Lamp, once more,
Our fathers' armoury to explore,
And sort and number wistfully
A few bright weapons, bathed on high.

Keble was fully aware of the many serious dangers threatening the Church of England. He called the Oxford Movement 'a holy warfare' against its three chief enemies which affected man in his very nature, thus undermining all religious activity. First, there was Erastianism, which was willing to sacrifice the apostolical prerogative of the Church to political expedience. In the second place, there was Rationalism, which aimed at replacing apostolical truth by rationalistic ingenuity. And then there was Nominalism, which wanted "to resolve the high mysteries of the faith into mere circumstances of language and methods

²) *Lyra Apostolica* is the title of a collection of 179 poems reprinted from the *British Magazine* and published anonymously in 1836. The contributors were J. W. BOWDEN, R. H. FROUDE, J. KEBLE, J. H. NEWMAN, R. I. WILBERFORCE and I. WILLIAMS. The poems aimed at recalling to the reader important Christian truths which were in danger of being forgotten. 'The Churchman to his Lamp' is no. 64 in the Methuen edition of 1879.

of speaking adapted to our weak understanding, but with no real counterpart in the nature of things" ³).

Evangelicalism, however, was another menace in Keble's eyes. It suggested to people that sentiments and feelings of attachment to Christ were the essence of religion, and that definite notions of Christ's Person, His nature and office might very well be dispensed with. It made people inclined to conclude either that such mysteries of the orthodox Catholic faith as the Trinity, the Incarnation and communion with God through His Sacraments were unnecessary to be distinctly believed, or that such belief would come of itself if only the feelings of dependence on Christ were sincere ⁴).

Keble clearly distinguished all these various menaces to the spirituality of the Church of England as aspects of the spirit of the age. Characterized as it was by self-sufficiency, this spirit inclined men to look for their aims of life in themselves. Both the overestimation of the powers of human reason and the nursing of pious feelings and sentiments tended to lock man up in himself and to limit his world to visible reality. Thus the relation between man and the universe, originally designed by God when He created man a being of both body and mind, was completely disturbed. In Keble's opinion, man's attitude towards life and the view of his place in the universe was distorted beyond recognition. In the words of W. Lock, Keble "craved for a religion which should affect the whole man, and keep both feelings and intellect under the control of the will" ⁵). Keble himself formulated this typical maxim of his by saying, "Nothing in the world is really important, except so far as it may be brought to bear upon religion. Nothing in religion itself is important, except so far as it may be brought to bear upon practice" ⁶).

Before we shall show how these words of Keble must be interpreted in the light of his writings, it will be useful to give a short description of the surroundings where the foundations were laid of the personality for whom religion was the all absorbing interest and the source of every thought and intention.

Until the early part of 1807, when Keble became an undergraduate of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, he had been educated at home and prepared for his matriculation by his father, who had been a Fellow of

³) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. vii, pp. 215-219; id., s. ix, pp. 239, 240.

⁴) cf. KEBLE, *Tract 60*, pp. 3 ff.

⁵) WALTER LOCK, *John Keble, a Biography*, 5th ed., London 1893, p. 20.

⁶) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. iii, p. 74.

the same College and was during the greater part of his life vicar of the village of Fairford, Gloucestershire. His mother, a very pious woman, was the daughter of the incumbent of Ringwood, Hampshire. The family consisted of five children, two boys and three girls, John being the second child and the eldest boy. The details given by his friend and first biographer, J. T. Coleridge, about the atmosphere in the domestic circle speak of a happy intimacy and a perfect harmony⁷). The traditions of the family are said to have been cavalier and non-juring. Undoubtedly they were very religious and highly cultivated. Already at a very early age, the children read French and Italian. They studied works like Butler's *Analogy* and Hooker's *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* with keen interest. It was the custom in the family to discuss all sorts of things freely and go deeply into theological, ecclesiastical, literary and social problems, the Bible being the standard generally applied in all cases.

Miss C. M. Cornish, a great friend of Keble's sisters, wrote, perhaps somewhat gushingly, in her diary on 28 September 1825, "They (the Keble family) lead such a quiet and simple life, their hearts are so softened and subdued by Christian principle and domestic affections, and they are so retired from the world, that they seem completely shut out from all its concerns and to be like the family of the Patriarch . . . They are all quite like Scripture characters, and altogether they realize the ideas, which the Bible gives us of a family, under the immediate protection of Heaven more than anything else could do . . ." ⁸).

There is no denying that Keble's style, both in his poetry and in his prose, is strikingly biblical in character. Long and devout studies must have imbued his mind with the language and the contents of the Bible ever since his youth. In other respects, too, the secluded and more or less protected life in the domestic circle up to his sixteenth year cannot but have set an indelible stamp on John's character. Very probably it determined his attitude towards life.

At College he was somewhat shy at first, because he had not been accustomed to live among so many unknown people. However, he soon shared the social life of his College, made many friends, and applied himself to his studies. J. T. Coleridge writes about these years, "We were somewhat boyish in manner . . . but our interest in literature, ancient and modern, and in all the stirring matters of that stirring time,

⁷) J. T. COLERIDGE, *A Memoir of the Rev. John Keble*, 3rd ed., London 1870, pp. 2 ff.

⁸) In a collection of copies of letters from John Keble's sisters, chiefly written to Miss Charlotte M. Cornish. Unpublished. Keble College Library.

was not boyish. We debated the classic and romantic question, we discussed poetry, history, logic and philosophy”⁹⁾).

Though Keble hardly ever shows himself a philosopher in his way of thinking or arguing, it will appear that his outlook on life was at least indirectly influenced by the philosophical principles of the great classical thinkers Plato and Aristotle. In his writings, their names are sometimes, though not frequently, mentioned and their representative works are to be found on the shelves of his bookcases still kept in a special bay of Keble College Library, together with several volumes of Thomas Aquinas, Locke and Bishop Butler.

As might be gathered from Keble’s interleaved edition of Aristotle’s *De Rhetorica*, he must have studied this work very thoroughly. Probably he was anxious to become a good preacher and wanted to improve his style generally. In one of the notes scribbled in the book, it says that “rhetoric is useful 1. to ensure the right and fair chance of success. 2. to instruct popularly. 3. to meet sophistry. 4. to adorn man’s nature.” He cannot have been without his ambitions, an impression which is strengthened by the fact that he wrote several times, though never successfully, for the university prize for English poetry. Later on, such ambitions were left far behind.

In 1810, aged 18, John obtained the very rare academic distinction of a double first-class in the Classics and Mathematics, a distinction which up to that time had been earned only by Robert Peel¹⁰⁾. In 1811 he was elected Fellow of Oriel, then one of the most renowned Colleges. In 1812 he gained the two prizes for the Chancellor’s Essays, both the English and the Latin one. His was indeed a very brilliant career. In his autobiography Isaac Williams, Keble’s pupil, wrote, “His double first class and two prizes in the same year invested him with a bright halo and something of awe in the eyes of an undergraduate”¹¹⁾. It was but natural that the young man’s hopes and ambitions ran high.

Proportionately sobering must have been the experiences he underwent as a member of the staff of Oriel College, where in the common room the liberal and rather overbearing thinker Whately took the lead in nearly every discussion on any subject touching life and method of thinking. There John’s eyes were probably opened so rudely, that he must have been shocked by the contrast between the mental attitude

⁹⁾ J. T. COLERIDGE, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

¹⁰⁾ *id.*, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

¹¹⁾ G. PREVOST, *The Autobiography of Isaac Williams*, 2nd ed., London 1892, pp. 15, 16.

common among the Noetics, as this group of influential Oriel scholars was called, and the attitude he had been accustomed to in the family circle. At any rate, it is clear from such details as we have about this period that he passed through a crisis at the time. During the years 1816, 1817 he struggled against a rather serious form of melancholy. The fact that he began to assist his father in his pastoral work in the country after being ordained a priest in 1816 may have heightened the effect of the great contrast between the two totally different walks of life. Oxford, which he had been taught to look up to as the traditional stronghold of English theology, had become a disillusion to him owing to the unmistakably liberal leanings of its foremost thinkers. Instinctively, he felt from the very start that their rationalistic philosophy could never be a guide among the many puzzling realities of life. Only, he knew he was no match for such authoritative opponents as Whately and his Noetics. He found consolation in his poetic compositions and in the poetry of Wordsworth, whose personal acquaintance he made in 1815. The latter's theories confirmed what his father had always taught him, namely that there were close connections between the human soul and nature. Fortunately, they counterbalanced the theories of callous and impassive thinkers who degraded the world to a mere background or to a field of productive activity for mankind. It is quite typical of Keble that his reaction against the Oxford atmosphere was expressed in terms of physical disgust. Before leaving Oxford for his pastoral work in the country, he wrote to J. T. Coleridge in the early part of 1817, "The very smell of the Schools sickened me; and I am now free to give myself up entirely to my profession" ¹²).

Still, Oxford retained a strong hold on his affections, and soon he was called back to enter upon various academic duties, among other things he was appointed Tutor at Oriel. New disappointments were awaiting him in this function. Just like Newman, he regarded tutorial work as a kind of pastoral care. Education, not instruction, was his chief aim. Several Heads of Houses, however, held different opinions on this point, and his intercourse with his pupils was sometimes severely criticized and often thwarted. On 29 Jan. 1818 he asked Coleridge's view of the matter. "You consider Tuition as a species of pastoral care, do you not? otherwise it might seem questionable, whether a clergyman ought to leave a cure of souls for it. And yet there are some people at Oxford who seem to imagine that College Tutors have nothing to do

¹²) J. T. COLERIDGE, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

with the morale. If I thought so, I would never undertake the office" ¹³).

Towards the end of 1818 some serious event, probably the death of his sister Sarah, seems to have helped him definitely to overcome his doubts about man's place in life and in the world. He had found the remedy of his melancholy in hopeful resignation. While at Oriel, he wrote to J. T. Coleridge, "Anxieties are the greatest of mercies; they are, I verily believe, the only effectual means to wean us from our idols. We may make good resolutions, and do much towards keeping them, but there is something so subtle and insinuating in earthly happiness (and the more so in proportion to its innocence and purity) that one such pang, or misgiving, as leaves a lasting impression of its insecurity, will do more towards lifting our hearts where they ought to be, than all that most of us could, or at least would, do for ourselves" ¹⁴). The crisis was over. Again he had become aware of the truth that he had learned in his youth: man could only be really happy in complete dependence on God, and should neither expect nor look for any result of his personal pursuits.

Later on, in the years when the Oxford Movement was at its height, Keble passed through another crisis of the same sort. Again it was the influences from his youth that made him return to his original course with renewed and even more inflexible firmness. In his autobiography Isaac Williams wrote about the year 1858, "When staying at Hursley, I remember John Keble saying, 'I look now upon my time with Newman and Pusey as a sort of parenthesis in my life; and I have now returned again to my old views such as I had before. At the time of the great Oxford Movement, when I used to go up to you at Oxford, Pusey and Newman were full of the wonderful progress and success of the movement — whereas I had always been taught that the truth must be unpopular and despised, and to make confession for it was all that one could do; but I see that I was fairly carried off my legs by the sanguine views they held and the effects that were showing themselves in all quarters' " ¹⁵).

What were those views to which Keble always returned and which underwent hardly any modification in the course of his life? In order to find an answer to this question we have to make an attempt at analysing Keble's spirituality. Isaac Williams, one of Keble's most intimate

¹³) J. T. COLERIDGE, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

¹⁴) *id.*, p. 81.

¹⁵) G. PREVOST, *The Autobiography of I. Williams*, p. 118.

friends, speaks in this connection of 'the Bisley-Fairford School' ¹⁶⁾. His formulation of its most characteristic rule is, "Do your duty in faith, and leave the effect to God". He distinguished two clearly diverging lines in the development of the Oxford Movement. Over against the restless intellectualism of Newman, by whose brilliancy many people were carried away, he placed the steady sobriety of John and Thomas Keble. He said he constantly tried to move the two brothers to publish in order to keep pace with Newman and so to maintain a more practical turn in the Movement. According to him, only the Bisley-Fairford School, which he considered a continuation of the traditions of Bishop Wilson and Bishop Butler ¹⁷⁾, could keep the Movement safe.

Most striking in Keble's outlook on life is that it presents the greatest possible contrast to the ideas current among the majority of his contemporaries. In a period when the service of God seemed to have been replaced by the service of man in his progress to material prosperity and self-sufficiency, Keble may have made the impression of going deliberately to the other extreme in order to bring out all the more clearly the littleness of man and the worthlessness of all human achievement. Keble's sincerity is, however, too much beyond any doubt to suspect him of any such studied intentions. His whole personality was, as it were, a slashing criticism of the spirit of the age at the time of the Oxford Movement, when the great struggle between faith and science, which may be said to have lasted throughout the nineteenth century, was only in its initial stage. In their anxiety for the cause of the Anglican Church, whose

¹⁶⁾ Named after the two villages of Bisley and Fairford, the livings of Thomas Keble and John's father respectively. Williams clearly suggests that John and Thomas applied and put into practice what they had learned from their father in their youth. cf. G. PREVOST, *The Autobiography of I. Williams*, pp. 23 ff.

¹⁷⁾ Wilson, Bishop of Sodor and Man († 1755), was, according to BRILLIOTH, "one of the last and most attractive representatives of old High Anglicanism". (*Anglican Revival*, p. 134). His chief work is *Sacra Privata*, a work of devotion popular till far into the 19th century. What attracted Keble most in Wilson was his self-discipline, his readiness to recognize the Roman Catholics as part of the Church Universal, and his pastoral spirit. Keble devoted 16 years to writing Wilson's biography (publ. 1863). The motto he prefixed to the work was 'The care of Discipline is Love'. — About Bishop Butler's influence on Keble more will be said in the course of this work. How closely Butler's *Analogy* was associated with the Oxford Movement may appear from an interesting detail to be found in R. D. MIDDLETON, *Newman at Oxford* (1950). The author gives as one of the reasons why this theological work was removed from the list of books prescribed by the University, that the habit of appealing to the *Analogy* had made it unpopular with the representatives of the anti-Newman reaction. See p. 38.

position was then so very weak, a great many earnest people may very well have looked up to this man as the representative of sound religious tradition.

In Keble's conception of life the spiritual and the intellectual still formed an indissoluble unity. Like medieval man, he conceived the universe as one whole of which God is the centre. Consequently, religion was to him the essence of life, and as such it could not but be the determining factor in the intellectual field as well. The separation between religion and philosophy, brought about by rationalism, was in his conviction a fatal disruption of the unity of life. By placing man in the centre of life and confining life to the visible world, philosophy had proved itself to be no longer adjusted to the reality of human existence. Ultimately, he feared, this modern philosophic attitude could end in nothing less than the neglect or the denial of the fundamental facts of Christianity, Christ's Incarnation and man's complete dependence on God. To any faithful Christian, however, he thought it would be self-evident that with Christ's Incarnation an entirely new life had begun for man. Nothing could any longer be looked upon from the world's point of view after Christ's life on earth. What had been an insurmountable obstacle to the great philosophers among the peoples of Antiquity, because their view was necessarily confined within the boundaries of their world, had at once been removed for all believers by Christ's Incarnation and God's Revelation of the truth. Leading a religious life was therefore to Keble the human response to God's demand of faith. It was not merely the recognition of a particular system of moral principles or the regular experience of a series of pious emotions as, in fact, it had not infrequently become in the opinion of a great many people, especially in the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Keble defined faith as 'making a venture on things unseen' or as 'looking towards things out of sight as real things', and it was his strong conviction that such faith necessarily implied complete detachment from the spells of the world. This consideration lies at the root of his conception of life, and in making it his contribution to the programme of the Oxford Movement, he actually set it against the spirit of the age. The prevailing mental attitude was, in his opinion, mainly determined by the combination of science and a philosophy 'falsely so called', or by the application of the scientific way of thinking to such practical fields as life and religion. It was a false philosophy, because it had no longer anything transcendental in it. Philosophy had apparently given up its essential task of speculating on the meaning of life. Instead, it had joined

hands with science. Their joint efforts were aimed at attaining useful knowledge as a means to material prosperity. The world was no more than the material lying ready for man's activities. It was to be acted upon, influenced and transformed for the sake of man's progress. Rather than wisdom, it was cleverness, efficiency, utility and usefulness that were the great objects in life. The one object of all knowledge was to enrich people with new inventions and to make man the ruler of Nature. Science and philosophy had purposely combined, he suspected, to wage war upon Christianity and their success was already clearly visible. They had already gone far in 'prevailing on the Anglican Church to take them into her councils'. The results of this, Keble feared, were inevitable. They would "stain her discipline with the world's policy and lower her doctrine to the world's standard of credibility" ¹⁸). Most characteristic of this mentality was its 'irreverent use of reason', "to treat as profane what may be sacred, though not as yet proved to be so . . . To slight divine mysteries, because we cannot comprehend or explain them . . . To forfeit divine grace, because, being unable to trace its workings, we will not be at the trouble to seek it" ¹⁹). Keble was convinced that the scientific way of thinking simplified matters far too much to take the realities of life into account. It could only be combated by the biblical way of thinking, which, with its typical concreteness, was adapted to the needs of human nature.

It was therefore but natural that Keble should expect everything from a return to the original Christian spirit based on the Bible and Tradition. The world was again to be regarded as God's creation and part of the universe, intended by God to promote man's eternal happiness. Real happiness could not possibly consist in the satisfaction of man's material needs, nor in the control of Nature. It could only consist in seeing the totality of all that exists and in penetrating deeper and deeper into the right understanding of man's dependence on God. The meaning attached to 'knowledge' was again to become the one recommended in the Bible, where wisdom was represented as a duty within the reach of all men. So it could hardly mean anything else than 'the practical understanding of our true interest' ²⁰). Real knowledge could only consist in a clear apprehension and the right interpretation of the visible world as the way of approach to God.

¹⁸) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. ix, p. 237.

¹⁹) id., *Postscript* s. viii, p. 358.

²⁰) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. i, pp. 10-16.

How did Keble see the world? — Instead of being a field of activity, the world was to Keble a sphere of relationships. These relations existed not only among people, but just as well between man and all inanimate objects. All communication of man with the outer world was to spring from man's inner life, from his desire of getting into contact with 'the realities beyond the visible world' through the intermediary of the visible world. According to Keble, it was not man's mission to transform and act upon the material world. On the contrary, man was to let himself be influenced, to let himself be stirred by the outer world. Only in this way could the world be what it was originally intended to be, namely the one great symbol, the manifestation of God, the meeting-place in which the divine and the human could communicate. Thus Nature could be a source of inspiration, stimulating man to reach out for the invisible supernatural realities. Although Keble does not anywhere say so explicitly, it is clear from his writings that to him the human mind is related to the universality of all that exists, and that all that exists is related to the human mind. The whole of creation exists to help man to get into the closest possible contact with God. He had learned that from the early Fathers, and he found the same idea in the philosophical writings of Bishop Butler and in the poetry of Wordsworth. Butler and Wordsworth, he felt, gave countenance to his conviction that the only remedy against the narrowing spirit of the age was a return to the way of thinking of the Ancient Church. In this connection he regarded Sir Walter Scott, too, as a man of great merit. Keble admitted that the Oxford Movement had derived a great deal of inspiration from him. About his influence Keble said, "Whatever of good feeling and salutary prejudice exists in favour of ancient institutions, and in particular the sort of rally which this Kingdom has witnessed during the last three years, not to say the continuance of the struggle at all through the storm of the preceding — is it not in good measure attributable to the chivalrous tone which his writings have diffused over the studies and tastes of those who are now in the prime of manhood? His rod, like that of a beneficent enchanter, has touched and guarded hundreds, both men and women, who would else have been reforming enthusiasts" ²¹).

The early Fathers interpreted and utilized all created things in their functional quality of directing man's thoughts and devotional feelings to God. From this Keble concluded that sacramentalism was evidently the keystone of the Christian conception of life. The correctness of this in-

²¹) KEBLE, Review Life of Walter Scott, *Occ. Papers and Reviews*, p. 67.

ference, he thought, was borne out by the disinterested attitude of a child towards the world around him, which proved it to be the innate approach to Nature as well.

Keble had a far better insight into the typical nature of the child than was common in the nineteenth century. Perhaps it was because he had such an uncomplicated character himself. Besides, Wordsworth's ideas about the child's nearness to God and Nature may have influenced him. However, we may be sure that it was primarily Christ's own words about children that made him approach the child with such great reverence. In the child he saw a divine mystery, and being like a child was to him the measure of the Christian's life. Having a 'child's temper' was absolutely 'essential to a place in the Kingdom of Heaven', chiefly for this reason, that "a child's temper is most opposite to all self-praise, to all thought of one's own sacrifices" ²²). In Keble's eyes, a child's disinterestedness and unworldliness formed its greatest attractions. The serene confidence with which a child meets life struck him as characteristic of human nature in its uncorrupted stage. He saw the contact of a child with life as direct and honest, without any artificiality or self-centredness. A child does not reflect on itself, but spontaneously it goes out of itself to meet every person and object around it. That was, in his opinion, the very reason why there were still realities in a child's life. Grown-ups, on the other hand, are always on their guard. They are suspicious and want to be sure they are on the safe side. They have lost all spontaneity because their confidence in the world around them is shaken. Consequently, they are hard-hearted, calculating, cunning and selfish in finding their means to attain their private ends. The objects and persons in their surroundings are no longer realities to them, but only things which they regard merely with a view to their usefulness. Unlike a child, they put their trust and confidence only in what they do themselves. Instead of committing all their doings to God, they imagine they can depend entirely on their own success. Therefore, Keble said, they expect far more than there is to be had in life. They think man has it in his power to choose his own happiness, and they would never leave it in the hands of anybody else, not even in those of the Creator. They would never let God determine for them what is happiness and what adversity ²³). Children, however, feel entirely dependent on their surroundings. "As children have peace and rest in their hearts,

²²) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. xi, p. 279.

²³) cf. *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. iii, s. 5, pp. 47, 48.

casting their care entirely on their nurses and parents, so will the wise and knowing and experienced men of the world, when they have learned in earnest to cast their care upon God" ²⁴). And in another passage in the same sermon, to mention only one of the many places in which he pointed out to people what it was exactly that prevented them from becoming like children, he said, "There is a sort of pride and self-reliance, which is apt to grow on us as we grow older, especially if we have been prosperous, and are esteemed and feel ourselves skilful in our several ways of life. We shall never be truly good and happy, until we have learned to put all this away from us, and think more, far more, of any simple innocent child than of ourselves, and all the worldly-wise men of our acquaintance" ²⁵). The child is an example to grown-ups in that it is simple instead of proud and self-conscious, in that it is dependent instead of self-reliant. The great contrast between the spirit of the age and the Christian conception of life is the contrast between selfishness and self-sufficiency on the one hand, and the consciousness of dependence on the other. The only remedy was a return to the spirit of the Ancient Church as it was qualified by St. Ambrose in the following passage which is quoted by Keble in his *Tract 89*, "It is not by the nature of the elements, but by the nature of Christ, who hath done all according to God's will, abounding in the fulness of His Godhead, that we are to order our thoughts of what was made, and our inquiries into that which nature could bring about . . . God seeth not as man seeth; God looketh on the heart, man on the outward appearance . . . Far be it then from thee to judge by thine eyes of the things which He made, or by thine own thoughts to argue concerning them" ²⁶).

Man's self-sufficiency and self-reliance, which had made God an abstraction, could only be remedied by making God's permanent presence in the world again the first principle in life. People had again to learn the simple truths of the Bible that man was created by God for God's honour and glory, and that human happiness consists in nothing else; that man had sinned and lost his eternal happiness; that he was redeemed by Christ, who suffered Himself to be crucified for man's redemption; that Christ has set the great example to man in doing the will of His Father; that after His resurrection from the dead, Christ sent His Spirit and founded His Church as the continuation of His life

²⁴) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. ii, s. 33, p. 333.

²⁵) *id.*, p. 334.

²⁶) KEBLE, *Tract 89*, pp. 141, 142.

on earth, so that in the Church Christ is still present in the world and in the life of each individual Christian, just as personally as He was present to His Apostles; that the Church is therefore the one and indispensable means of assistance for man to reach his final aim. In order to make people again conscious of these facts Keble published his volume of poetry, *The Christian Year*, for in the course of the Christian year all these facts in the life of Christ and of the Church, His Mystical Body, are successively commemorated. Every person who takes these facts not as mere words but as realities of fundamental value in human life, cannot fail to see the absolute necessity, the great duty of thankfulness, obedience and docility. People had again to be convinced of the essential truth underlying all these facts, that every being is for its reality constantly dependent on God, that it is God's goodness which has called them into existence, and that it was Christ's sacrifice which has restored them to eternal existence. Keble did not doubt that these truths were still acknowledged in words, but from experience he knew that to a great many churchmen they seemed to have lost their meaning. In one of his sermons he said, "As things now are, we are for ever acknowledging this truth in words, but the more we talk about it, the less, too often, do some of us appear practically to bear it about with them. For indeed, this truth, the need of God's continual help, is of all truths most certain to degenerate into mere words, unless it be really acted on" ²⁷). Whether this truth is really acted upon is not at all dependent on intellectual acuteness, he maintained, but primarily on whether man has a 'single mind and a heart full of reverence'. And he worked this out by saying, "A person cannot claim the promise of spiritual wisdom until he has a faithful heart, until he fully trusts God, submits himself to God's holy will, is willing to let God choose for him with a heart thoroughly resigned and contented" ²⁸).

In his contemporaries this faith was missing, he feared. It had been suppressed by their complacent over-estimation of the intellect. Their one-sided accentuation of the 'ratio' had caused them to neglect an instinct created by God in human nature, namely the instinct to distinguish 'safety' from 'unsafety'. In that, according to Keble, all faith had its source. So Keble placed faith on a moral basis. To him, confidence in a righteous Governor of the world lay at the root of faith, and this confidence was instinctive. If all was left to chance, he argued, there

²⁷) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. i, s. 14, p. 146.

²⁸) *id.*, s. 32, pp. 322-329.

would be no sense in comparing 'safe' and 'unsafe' or 'good' and 'evil'. If man had no instinctive faith in the veracity of this Governor, it would be impossible for him to have confidence in his impressions about the course of nature, to believe in his own senses or to take his personal identity for granted. In his preface to the *Academical and Occasional Sermons* he wrote, "This our faith may arise from an instinct, unconsciously recognizing the presence and power of God, who actuates all things and moves them by general laws" ²⁹). He calls 'preferring the safe way' a principle of faith, 'since it must ever issue in preferring eternity to time'. The influence of Butler's *Analogy* is clearly to be seen here, and it may be called Keble's greatest homage to his revered master that he took reasoning from analogy to stand on a religious basis.

Though not given to speculative philosophy, Keble was sufficiently versed in it to prefer it to modern philosophy, which, he said, prided itself on teaching that there must be as few miracles as possible because the truth should be clear and plain, and it should leave nothing unaccounted for ³⁰). He greatly preferred ancient philosophers like Plato and Aristotle, who were aware of their limitations and had accepted the fact that it was impossible for man ever to reach full knowledge. He was convinced that their philosophy was interwoven with religious aspirations, and that 'faith' played an important part in it. From this it was clear, he thought, that God had not 'left Himself without witness' among these ancient peoples. Therefore Keble regretted that among his contemporaries there was a tendency greatly to undervalue the philosophy of the Greeks and the Romans, whereas many of their moral treatises "contained truth and reason enough to put the Christian world to shame for many things, which pass daily in it as natural and excusable" ³¹). It was evidently Plato's and Aristotle's object, just as it was Butler's in the eighteenth century, 'to stop the mouths of a sceptical and too argumentative generation' by referring people as regards their religious views to their practice in matters of temporal interest. So also in classical philosophy there was the principle of reasoning from analogy, for these philosophers taught their contemporaries "to take, practically, the side of virtue and self-denial, wherever the evidence seems doubtful" ³²). The same principle, which Keble called 'implicit faith', is recommended in the Bible as a safe guide even for uneducated men

²⁹) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, Preface, p. xiii.

³⁰) cf. KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. viii, pp. 212-214.

³¹) id., s. ii, p. 25.

³²) id., p. 32.

through all fundamental difficulties in religion. Its gradual development could not only be traced in the Jewish and Christian revelations, but also in the Greek and Roman phases of the history of mankind. Keble thought this a strong proof that faith has its source in an instinct innate in human nature. His studies of the chief uninspired authorities of the time before the coming of Christ had taught him that "continually by God's good providence more and more advantage was given, a door was opened wider and wider, to implicit faith" ³³).

The early Fathers also held, explicitly or implicitly, that there is a moral sense in the heart of man, and correlative with it, a real difference between right and wrong in human conduct, independent of all results and consequences here on earth. It was partly on this ground, he thought, that the Fathers appeared to prefer the school of Plato to all others. Plato's demand of implicit faith was especially worked out in his *Phaedo* and the *Apology of Socrates*, and although on the whole "he would not speak positively on the great truths of natural religion, because he knew no evidence to warrant his doing so, yet by all his discourses, and still more by his example, he did most uniformly and positively recommend to men to act as if those truths were entirely demonstrated" ³⁴). In the 8th book of his *De Civitate Dei*, St. Augustine accounted for his preference of Plato. St. Clement of Alexandria concurred with Plato, and Origen acknowledged the remarkable coincidence between the principles of Plato's morality and those which the Bible sanctions. In a way, therefore, the early Fathers realized, 'though in an incomparably higher sense', Keble added emphatically, the theory of Plato that everything existed in two worlds, in the world of sense according to the outward nature and relations of persons and things, and in the 'intellectual' world according to their spiritual associations. This, Keble observed, was sometimes scornfully called the Platonism of the early Church, but he scouted the idea, adding that "the allegation implied in that name is about as correct as if one should say, the sun's light was borrowed from the reflection of the moon in the water" ³⁵).

The traditional Christian world-view of the early Fathers and indirectly the speculations about life of the uninspired classical philosophers are therefore the basis of Keble's conception of life. From these authors he had learned that for all practical purposes, among which

³³) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. ii, p. 34.

³⁴) id., s. ii, pp. 29-31.

³⁵) cf. KEBLE, *Tract 89*, pp. 72-78.

religion is the very first, 'implicit faith' takes priority of reason as 'a spring of action'. These writers had convinced him that it is in accordance with God's design of human nature that man's contact with the transcendental should spring from his perception of what is right and wrong. In order to be able to distinguish them man has been given an instinct. Due to this instinct, man can see what is the 'safe course' for him, or in other words, what is most likely to satisfy all sides of human nature, and at the same time what will make the surest response to the obligations which man owes to God. Instinctively man can know that it is 'safest' for him to do, not what is visibly best for himself, but what is most pleasing to God. It was therefore evident, Keble thought, that the utilitarian theory of morals is a reprehensible one. It asserts that the greatest discernible good of the individual is the proper measure of right and wrong, clearly showing that it fails to transcend the narrow world of production and consumption.

Owing to original sin man had become blind to his chief purpose in life. Guided by his 'fallen' implicit faith, he had looked for his happiness in all directions. Then Christ's Incarnation and Death had restored the contact between God and man, and by His Revelation God had opened man's eyes. Therefore, Keble concluded, "it is only safe to take God's will exactly as we find it declared in the Bible, interpreted by the Church, and not to perplex ourselves with philosophical or other fancies. Only in this way may we obtain a complete view of our condition here on earth and of our duty, building higher and higher, feeling that our foundation is sure. This is the only way of escaping the curse, that we should for ever continue to be wavering and unsteady in all the great rules and principles, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" ³⁶). For Keble there was no need of theorizing. He believed in the idea of a static religious authority. This authority he found in the Bible, in the Tradition of the Primitive Church, in man's 'moral sense' and in the sayings of wise and experienced people. Religion was to him the interpretation and practical application of the truths to be found in them.

This brings us to another element in Keble's conception of life, namely his conviction that it is a duty to yield oneself completely to the teachings and practice of the faith as they were once for all delivered to the Apostles. Unlike Newman, Keble did not feel the necessity of finding an intellectually satisfactory basis of his religious faith. Without any question

³⁶) KEBLE, *Tract 60*, p. 12.

he simply accepted what truths there were. W. Lock says of this characteristic of Keble, "Truth was a master to be served, not to be criticized and patronized; it was like the ark which he dreaded to touch with unconsecrated hands" ³⁷). He was fully aware of the fact that man is not a pure spirit but a 'mixed creature', and a fallen creature too, so that it cannot possibly be for him to understand the essence and universality of things. The only thing man can do, in his opinion, is to approach all created things with a great and well-founded expectancy. Probability was to him the highest achievement of all man's strivings after the truth. Man can gradually move on from probability to probability, thus getting nearer and nearer to the truth. Perseverance and hopefulness are therefore subjects which recur regularly in Keble's writings. Some passages taken from one of his academical sermons may be inserted here as examples. "Hope", he said, "... is an actual throwing off and mastering the impressions of importunate present evils... It lifts up and buoys up the whole man towards the good which faith only discerns... Faith, simply taken, only goes beyond what we see, but hope also goes against it... Hope not only realizes, but appropriates the unseen good. It is, therefore, both a more immediate spring of action, and, as recognizing God's unchangeable goodness, more intimately tied to love, the 'end of the commandment' and 'the bond of all perfectness'" ³⁸).

He strongly objected to any attempt at dealing with theology as a science. In his opinion, it could not result in anything else than in the development of new doctrines or in the rejection of old ones. This was clearly contrary to God's intentions, and so it was sinful. What did interest him was the connection between religion and the intellectual and moral faculties of man. He wanted to improve what he called 'the science of human nature', the knowledge of those faculties in man which are of the greatest importance in religious practice, such as the affections and especially the will. He wanted his contemporaries to realize that an approximate understanding of all that Christ has done for mankind can be converted into a motive power for feelings like gratitude, reverence and love. Such feelings would show man the way to his perfect and final safety, for it was Keble's personally ascertained experience that the knowledge of divine truth is the highest reward and the noblest

³⁷) W. LOCK, *John Keble, a Biography*, 5th ed., London 1893, p. 230.

³⁸) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. xiii, pp. 321 ff.

achievement of a personal love of God. This maxim is typical of Keble: Truth is not an object of quest, it is the reward of love of God.

In his *Apologia* Newman relates that the doctrine 'Probability is the guide of life' which he had learned from Butler, was brought home to him by Keble's *Christian Year*, in which, he said, it was 'recast in the creative mind of my new master'. Very soon afterwards, however, Newman saw that the danger of such a doctrine consisted in "the tendency to destroy absolute certainty, to consider every conclusion as doubtful, to resolve the truth into a matter of opinion, which it is safe, indeed, to obey or to profess, but not possible to embrace with full internal assent" ³⁹). The very choice of words already shows the great contrast between the two personalities. Newman could not rest before the whole of a subject had been brought out as clearly as possible. He required clarity above all other things. His greatest objection to the theory of Butler and Keble was that "it did not go to the root of the difficulty. It was beautiful and religious, but it did not even profess to be logical" ⁴⁰).

This dissatisfaction with the lack of logic, this thoroughness and inner urge to go to the root of things intellectually, which is so typical of Newman's character, forms at the same time a typical distinction between the two friends whose lives have developed along such divergent lines. The contrast may be illustrated here by the following two passages. The first is descriptive of Newman's personality: "I felt that there was an intellectual cowardice in not finding a basis in reason for my belief, and a moral cowardice in not avowing that basis. I should have felt myself less than a man, if I did not bring it out, whatever it was" ⁴¹). The following passage reflects Keble's characteristic point of view: "Whatever be the natural tendency of knowledge itself, so many temptations are called into action in the course of acquiring it, and still more in the display, which is necessary in order to make it useful to others, that it can hardly be considered upon the whole, more of an advantage towards the practice of piety than riches or honour or high birth" ⁴²).

Still, on closer examination, it appears that Newman's 'certainty' and

³⁹) NEWMAN, *Apologia*, London 1865, p. 19.

⁴⁰) id., *Apologia*, p. 20. Newman tried to solve the problem in his *Essay on Ecclesiastical Miracles*, in his *Essay on Development of Christian doctrine*, and in his *Grammar of Assent*. cf. Dr. ZENO, *Newman's leer over het menselijk denken*, Nijmegen 1942. cf. Dr. W. H. v. D. POL, *Wegen tot geloof*, Roermond 1952, ch. iii.

⁴¹) NEWMAN, *Apologia*, p. 66.

⁴²) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. iii, p. 54.

Keble's 'probability' are hardly more than a distinction without a difference. In his *Apologia*, Newman gives a very elucidative account of Keble's point of view on the subject. He writes, "Keble met this difficulty by ascribing the firmness of assent which we give to religious doctrine, not to the probabilities which introduce it, but to the living power of faith and love which accepts it. In matters of religion it is not merely probability which makes us intellectually certain, but probability as it is put to account by faith and love . . . Faith and love are directed towards an Object; in the vision of that Object they live; it is the Object, received in faith and love, which renders it reasonable to take probability as sufficient for internal conviction" ⁴³). It was the difference between the two personalities that led naturally to a different way of expressing the same thought and of bringing out its different aspects in full relief. Just like Keble, Newman, of course, accepted the fact that there would always remain mysteries in religious knowledge, but being of a philosophic cast of mind, Newman emphasized that, apart from divine mysteries, man was able to attain certainty about the truth. Philosophically, he could not feel at rest before he had worked out along what channels this certainty was to be attained. Keble, however, prudently preferred to view knowledge of the truth under the aspect of a divine reward of a life of faith and love. He knew from experience what the results were for religion if man in his self-conceit took it into his head to apply the scientific way of thinking to theological subjects. He thought it psychologically 'safer' to maintain that nobody ought to expect full satisfaction and certainty in religious enquiries, because he knew in what sense 'full satisfaction' and 'certainty' were taken by his contemporaries. In a time of intellectual pride, he felt the necessity of defending the mysterious part of religion. In a time of liberalism and self-determination, he taught that to a humble mind mystery ought to mean more than logic, and that only the practice of a Christian life can prove the truth of a doctrine and will gradually lead to that degree of certainty to which 'fallen man' is entitled. "Not intellectual ability, but qualities like patience, simplicity and diligence are comparatively all in all. They must choose our right course and ensure perseverance. Without them, mere velocity and energy would only take us farther wrong" ⁴⁴). Proud and self-sufficient man, who imagined that everything was within the reach of his mind, had to be reminded that he was

⁴³) NEWMAN, *Apologia*, p. 19.

⁴⁴) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. i, p. 5.

really in 'the station of a penitent'. Keble pointed out to him that "surely, it is enough and far too much, it is overflowing mercy for such as we are, to be allowed to do any the least work in the house of God, merely but to lift a hand or to breathe a prayer in the holy and blessed cause of the Church, which is His Body. Surely, it were presumption in us to look to behold the fruit of our labours" ⁴⁵).

Over against man's autonomy, the source of the nineteenth century ideal of progress, Keble placed man's participation in Christ. He constantly reminded his contemporaries that it is man's one and only task in life to serve and please God in everything. He taught them that participating in Christ means imitating Christ's sacrifice. As the world was redeemed by Christ doing the will of His Father, so it is evident that man can only find real freedom and true happiness in full submission to God's will.

There is nothing original in these thoughts, but what made Keble such an influential person was that he actually and consistently practised what he preached. 'Submission to God's will' represented a reality to him. Its import can perhaps best be summarized by quoting the following passage from one of his parochial sermons. "If we truly sacrifice our wisdom and learning, our natural sense and skill, what God has given us, to Him who bids us be humble and meek, and know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified, He will greatly and lovingly reward us by giving us the happy mind of little children . . . Whatever our line of life be, . . . the way to make ourselves truly wise in it and get a blessing upon it, is entirely to sacrifice and offer it up to God" ⁴⁶). This strain of strict unworldliness, exemplary humility and simplicity in Keble's character may account for the deep impression he made on his friends and on the many other people who asked his advice in spiritual matters. His sincerity and consistency in daily life must have made him the great motive power in the background of the Oxford Movement as a spiritual revival in the Anglican Church.

Although we have only very few details at our disposal, we may safely conclude from what little we have that Keble tried to lead an ascetic life. Froude's asceticism, of which a great many examples are to be found in his diary ⁴⁷), was no doubt to a large extent the fruit of Keble's personal influence on a sensitive young man who had the

⁴⁵) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. xiii, p. 328.

⁴⁶) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. ii, s. 33, pp. 333, 334.

⁴⁷) see FROUDE, *Remains*, London 1838.

courage to follow his master in everything. We know from Keble's writings that he called self-control 'the perfection of a mixed creature like man' ⁴⁸). He thought obedience one of the greatest virtues. 'Fallen man' should continually refuse to indulge his own fancy, even in harmless things, and keep the customs, laws and regulations of the Church, even though he does not at once see the use of them. He knew from experience that only by being anxious to let God choose for him can man respond to God's invitation to rise above the mere observance of the letter of the commandments. As long as man seeks himself, he will see God's commandments as restraints. Only if he is eager to sacrifice his own life and all it means to him from love of God, will he be able to see and experience those commandments in their true light, namely as 'real duties and privileges both' ⁴⁹), as means to reach his final aim in spite of his sinfulness.

What Keble understood by 'indulging one's own fancy' may appear from the fact that he thought it a shame to polish his own style, to study any worldly subject for its own sake. He criticized undue display of oratory or ingenuity in a preacher, saying, "It might be no unimproving exercise of Christian self-denial to men of refined judgment, if they would engage themselves habitually to put up with improprieties of style or method, with obscurities, or even fallacies not affecting practice, for the sake of giving themselves and others a better chance of profiting by sermons" ⁵⁰). He had a haunting fear of all that was unreal, and he thought everything unreal that had not God or His service for its aim. He could not appreciate the poetry of any author who was censurable from an ethical point of view. "Literary and intellectual advantages involve a man in a most serious responsibility before God. These advantages alone cannot advance us in genuine wisdom so far as the keeping of God's commandments will advance the weakest and humblest of our brethren" ⁵¹). Keble wished to dissociate himself from the *Christian Year* because he was afraid it gave the reader a picture of the author that was not at all true to reality ⁵²). It was always his personal practice and his advice to others to live absolutely separated from the things of the world. He was convinced that the greater a man's knowledge is of the material world, the less willing he

⁴⁸) KEBLE, Review Life of Walter Scott, *Occ. Papers and Reviews*, p. 18.

⁴⁹) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. xi, s. 31, p. 361.

⁵⁰) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. iii, p. 48.

⁵¹) *id.*, s. i, p. 22.

⁵²) *cf.* J. T. COLERIDGE, *op. cit.*, pp. 163-169.

will be to believe in the invisible, but nevertheless very real, world of the supernatural, the more he will allow himself to be guided by utility as the only consideration in life. In one of his sermons, he admonished his parishioners "not to look on things after their outward appearance. We must not be carried away with beauty, or strength, or skill, or what is called cleverness, or with learning, or with mirth and amusing ways, or with any such things. We must always stop and ask ourselves 'Does this man fear God? Does he keep His commandments?' before we choose any one to be our friend" ⁵³).

The idea of God's permanent presence dominated all Keble's activities. Although it made him conscious of his unworthiness, this did not depress him. He was convinced that all would be done for him, if only he directed his will to God and did his humble part gratefully and cheerfully. For "such faithful endeavour to obey, such thankful acknowledgment of God in all things, are rewarded by Him with a sense of His being your Father. His Presence is the presence of a loving Parent who takes pleasure in His children's efforts, how weak and mean soever, bears with their mistakes, pities and forgives their infirmities" ⁵⁴).

Keble had a special veneration for St. John the Evangelist, because he was to him a pattern of simple faith, pure love and childlike obedience. He analysed his character in several sermons and especially in his *Studia Sacra*, which consists partly of commentaries on the introductory verses of St. John's Gospel. It is clear that in this analysis Keble drew the character of the ideal Christian. To conclude this chapter on Keble's personality, a brief summary may be given here of his character-description of St. John, because it throws light indirectly on the character of Keble himself.

St. John did not trouble himself about long reasonings, Keble said, but was inclined to believe without seeing. His mind was affectionate and docile, not always restlessly seeking more and more knowledge. He was anxious to put into practice to the best of his ability all that he knew to be right. He knew Christ by a kind of instinct, 'as little children know their mothers and cling to them' ⁵⁵). Full of loyalty, he always tried to please Christ in everything. He never dwelt on the good he had done himself. After Christ's death he worked on, always watching for any signs his Lord might give of His presence or will. These signs he

⁵³) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. x, s. 42, p. 400.

⁵⁴) *id.*, vol. iii, s. 20, p. 206.

⁵⁵) *id.*, vol. x, s. 6, pp. 50, 51.

accepted at once just as they were, without inquiring why there were not more of them or why they were not clearer. He simply did what he was asked to do, and calmly awaited what would come of it. Everywhere he looked for tokens to keep his Master and Friend in memory. He was courageous in the service of God, showing his zeal in his attitude towards such persons who tried to corrupt the Church by their false doctrines ⁵⁶).

Keble's teachings about the right way of living represent the original intentions of Christ as he thought he found them laid down in the Bible. The terms he used were old and time-worn, but in his private life they became fully real and new. He brought out the living spirit from behind the letter, a spirit that was all but dead in nineteenth century Anglicanism. He helped to change formal appearances into living realities.

⁵⁶) cf. *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. x, sermons 2, 8, 29.

CHAPTER II

THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE AND KEBLE'S REACTION TO IT

Even a superficial survey of the situation in which England found itself in the first half of the nineteenth century brings out the complexity of the task with which the leaders of the Oxford Movement were confronted, when they realized that it was their duty to do everything in their power to try and turn the tide in order to save their Church from destruction.

Rationalism had permeated the philosophical, religious, social, economic and political theories of the period so thoroughly, that a mentality prevailed which was apparently averse from religion and everything that the Church represented. This mentality is so highly complicated that here we cannot do more than indicate the chief influences which occasioned it.

First of all, there is the influence of the philosophers of the preceding centuries, Bacon, Hobbes, Locke and Hume, who had continually drifted farther away from Christian dogma. Their ideas had stimulated the rise of Liberalism and free thinking, which, in their turn, had been the source of Deism at the end of the seventeenth century and had furthered its development in the course of the eighteenth. Due to their influence, the relation between God and the world as experienced by man had become vaguer and vaguer. There were Deists who accepted God's existence but denied any actual interference of God in the world. There were others who acknowledged such divine interference but limited it to the bare existence of things. They did not believe that God's providence comprises man's actions. They held that the moral quality of such actions is only a human invention ratified by human sanctions. In the opinion of a third category of Deists, God does punish evil and reward virtue, but as heaven and hell are creations of man's imagination, God's moral government is confined to this world only. Again, there were Deists who denied all supernatural revelation but accepted the five points of natural religion as they were set forth by

Lord Herbert¹⁾ of Cherbury: 1. There is a supreme Deity. 2. This Deity ought to be worshipped. 3. Virtue combined with piety is the chief part of divine worship. 4. Men should repent of their sins and turn from them. 5. Reward and punishment follow from the goodness and justice of God both in this life and after it²⁾.

2 — Secondly, there is the influence of the theory of Utility to which Jeremy Bentham has given his name. His maxim was, "It is the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong". Utilitarianism proclaimed pleasure to be the only good, and pain the only evil. It called self-interest the motive of every human act, and taught that by education and laws the individual could be induced to subordinate his personal happiness to that of the community. All moral and religious systems were considered a waste of energy. The influence of this theory was great in all liberal theorizing, and its effects were no doubt strengthened by the propagandistic activities of the followers of Bentham who worked in the slums, where they did much indeed to relieve the conditions of the poor and destitute.

3 → Thirdly, there is the sweeping change in the outlook on life caused by the Industrial Revolution. Naturally, all the many problems involved in it produced a strong preoccupation with practical and material values. The enormous economic expansion brought about by applied science drew people away from religion and caused progress and prosperity to become the all-absorbing interests in life. People came to believe that it was possible for them to create a future heaven on earth by their own exertions. Common sense was their guide, and it told them that any influence thwarting the regular progress of practical affairs should, if possible, be eliminated. The sober, rational, practical and respectable type of man became the ideal of the middle classes which, owing to their economic importance, took the lead after the Reform Bill of 1832. It was mainly their outlook on life that gradually caused the meaning of the term 'moral' to change and to adapt itself to their requirements. There was consequently a fairly general tendency to separate morality from religion in the course of the nineteenth century. This purely human

¹⁾ Edward Herbert, first Baron Herbert of Cherbury, (1583-1633), is known as the 'Father of Deism'. His *De Veritate* (Paris 1624, London 1625) is the first purely metaphysical work written by an Englishman. The theory of knowledge elaborated in it presents the same characteristics as that of the Cambridge Platonists (e.g. R. Cudworth, 1617-1688) who reacted against narrow Puritan dogmatism and against the materialism of Hobbes.

²⁾ cf. *Dict. de Théol. Cath.*, vol. 4, J. FORGET on 'Déisme'.

morality may be traced back to two sources. On the one hand, it was the result of an overestimation of the value and efficacy of natural religion, on the other hand, it was the fruit of the Puritan moral tradition which, since the seventeenth century, had left an ineffaceable impression on the English mentality, and which now responded readily to the ambitions of the rising middle and industrial classes of the nineteenth century. The chief elements in this tradition were devotion to business, strict discipline, abstinence, repression of emotions, disdain of pleasure, all of them qualities contributing to success in business and therefore dear to the heart of the bourgeois. Besides, this calculating sort of morality was encouraged by the prevailing utilitarian doctrines and propagated by Evangelicalism, one of the most living forms of Protestantism in the first half of the nineteenth century³). Morality, taken in this human sense, almost became an obsession, and draining off the intrinsic power of Christian morals, it dealt another paralyzing blow to Christianity. In the struggle between the natural and the supernatural, or between reason and faith, the natural had got the upper hand in the field of morality. Reasonableness and respectability tended to become the only legitimate tests of good and evil. How weak the resistance of the Church was at the time may appear from one of the standard arguments often adduced by orthodox Churchmen in defence of revealed religion. They knew nothing better to say than that Christianity provided stronger sanctions for human conduct than reason did. This kind of argument only favoured the rise and development of so-called theological utilitarianism, owing to which religion came to be regarded as a mere code of moral rules to the neglect of its supernatural character⁴).

The Church of England was utterly unable to cope with this situation. Many of its conservative clergymen seemed not to see the imminent dangers. They showed little or no vitality, and felt quite content in their material security. They were mainly occupied in looking after their own preferment. Even for them, the most important question seemed to be 'cui bono?'. The radicals among the clergy did not think much of dogma. The less radical group, among whom there were Thomas Arnold and Whately, thought that the Church had all but outlived its usefulness. If the divine origin and authority of the Church were no longer an inspiring reality for the majority of its clergy, what was to be expected

³) cf. R. H. TAWNEY, *Religion and the rise of capitalism*, Pelican ed., ch. iv.

⁴) cf. V. F. STORR, *The Development of English theology in the 19th century*, Longmans, 1913.

from the common people? In the big new industrial towns, the philanthropic Benthamites had their hard-working organizations to give such relief to the poor as might have kept this growing group of the population in touch with their Church, if only the Church had been the first to see its Christian task among them. The Church had almost completely lost its hold on the people. The fact that, since the Reform Bill, Parliament no longer consisted of members of the Established Church only, made matters worse in the eyes of those who were honestly interested in the welfare of their Church. Their indignation was roused whenever this Parliament was called in by the Church to interfere in purely spiritual and ecclesiastical affairs. Obviously, the Church was simply regarded as a human institution by many clergymen and laymen.

Keble's first official reaction was occasioned by the Government's scheme to suppress ten Irish bishoprics in order to save the money necessary to meet the deficiency which had been produced by the abolition of the Church cess in Ireland. Keble had been nominated to preach the sermon in St. Mary's, Oxford, before the Judges of Assize on 14 July 1833. He seized the opportunity to give vent to his feelings of anxiety and indignation. When on July 22 the sermon was published, the suppression of the sees had already become a fact. "The calamity had already overtaken this portion of the Church of God", as he said in the preface. He entitled the printed sermon *National Apostasy*, referring to a passage in which he had expressed his warning in the form of the rhetorical question, whether "Apostasy was too hard a word to describe the temper of a nation" that forced such enactments on its Government. Many years later Newman wrote in his *Apologia* that he had "ever considered and kept the day [14 July], as the start of the religious movement of 1833"⁵⁾.

Several writers on the Oxford Movement think this an exaggeration. They attach little or no importance to Keble's sermon, probably because it is couched in such measured terms. One should not forget, however, the precarious situation in which the Church found itself after the political events of the preceding years, nor should one forget the apathy prevailing among the clergy. It must have required great courage to say in public and in the presence of persons representing the Government what Keble then said in St. Mary's.

From our point of view the sermon is interesting because it already contains the chief elements of Keble's share in the Movement. It is a

⁵⁾ NEWMAN, *Apologia*, ed. 1865, p. 35.

kind of programme or plan of action. It also reveals the distinguishing features in his character which determined his personal attitude towards the problems with which he and the other leaders were confronted. We find in it the religious resignation so characteristic of Keble, the emphasis he used to lay on personal holiness, from which he expected much more than from any concerted action of ecclesiastical organizations. We find in it his loyalty to the State, a duty which he associated with allegiance to the Church.

He took for his text the words spoken by Samuel when the Jewish people demanded a king: "As for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way" (1 Sam. xii, 23), and applied the Old Testament scene to the situation of the English nation. He accused the State of usurping the commission of the Church and of infringing upon Apostolical rights. He reproached English Churchmen with deficiency in Christian resignation, with indifference to other men's religious sentiments. He warned them against their growing inclination to explain away all obligations to God, and against their impatience under pastoral authority. He advised earnest Christians to follow Samuel's example in combining 'sweetness with firmness, and consideration with energy'. In spite of the sad circumstances, the Church should remain constant in intercession and remonstrance. Every Churchman should devote himself entirely to the cause of the Apostolical Church, but 'public concerns, ecclesiastical or civil, should not engross their whole mind', or occupy all their care and thoughts 'to the neglect of such ordinary duties' as piety, purity, charity and justice. Order and submission to the State were still duties, he told them, and 'the more of loyal and affectionate feeling' they mingled with obedience the better. On the other hand, they were not obliged to submit to any 'profane intrusion', and he urged them 'to deprecate and abjure it from their hearts'.

From the *Assize Sermon* it already appears that Keble's reactions to the spirit of the age were of a double nature. He joined issue with the rationalistic mentality of his contemporaries by showing them the consequences of their overestimation of human reason as the sole instrument for attaining knowledge, and he brought out in full relief the supernatural character of the Anglican Church on the strength of it being a branch of the Church Universal.

In the preceding chapter we have seen that during his first years at Oxford Keble was perhaps more than normally ambitious to distinguish

himself intellectually, but that, when he was a Fellow of Oriel College, he was severely shocked by the free and supercilious way of discussing everybody and everything then common among the liberal 'Noetics'. As early as 1822, when he had already made up his mind to leave Oxford for the unspoilt country, he preached a sermon before the University which contains some passages that are illustrative of his attitude towards the function of human reason. Thinking it his duty to warn his audience, he pointed out to professors and students alike that intellectual talents always involve a most serious responsibility to God. He said, "We should surely delight ourselves less than I fear we do in general with the possession, and should take more pains about the use and regulation of those precious but dangerous endowments. We should less easily abandon ourselves to any investigation which may happen to attract us for the moment, without staying to inquire how far it is worth the time and thoughts of a Christian" ⁶). And previously he had already said, "It is not our intention to derogate, needlessly and untruly, from the value of high intellectual endowment, which must ever rank among the most precious of the talents committed to our charge in this world. It is not meant to be denied that original genius . . . is usually more successful in the discovery of new truths and in enlarging the field of argument than the most blameless and unrelaxing diligence alone. But those truths are almost sure to be mixed up with so much of error and paradox — to be so far overstated and misapplied for display's sake, for the pleasurable exercise of ingenuity and many other temptations, against which nothing but strict Christian self-control can secure us — that the chances are, on the whole, for their doing more harm than good to the discoverer, perhaps also to the world at large . . ." ⁷).

Much later, in 1841, when the Oxford Movement was at its height, the publication of Kilvert's edition of the *Unpublished Papers of Bishop Warburton* gave him a welcome opportunity to criticize the rationalistic mentality. In Keble's opinion, Warburton was representative of the spirit of his age, and his works helped to throw an instructive light on the eighteenth century way of thinking. Keble published his long criticism in the *British Critic* of 1841 ⁸). He called 'the overweening talk of human dignity and civil liberty' most characteristic of this men-

⁶) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. i, p. 23.

⁷) id., pp. 1-6.

⁸) reprinted in *Occasional Papers and Reviews*, J. Parker, Oxford 1877, pp. 108-147.

tality. An excessive craving for liberty was 'the fashionable quasi-idolatry of the era' ⁹). Because of his 'reason', man considered himself practically self-sufficient and independent.

These notions of man's liberty had of course also forced their way into theology. People seemed to think that the image of God in which man was first created, lay in the faculty of reason only. In the field of theology, too, everything ought to be explained and accounted for. Many minds, Keble said, were absorbed by the study of the external evidence of the Gospel, whereas the substance of the faith itself and its application in daily life were neglected. Apparently, men thought that the search after religious truth could only be called successful if some system could be built on such acknowledged facts as are recorded in Scripture. If the dispensation to which such facts belong is indeed from God, they argued, all the parts will surely prove to be the corresponding elements of one whole. Such a system was perfect if it accounted for all the facts, and its perfection was sufficient proof of its being true. So, in fact, only the orderly disposition of such things as man himself considered essential to a religious system could assure him of the truth of the Christian faith. Now, Warburton imagined he had given such a perfect system to the world in his *Divine Legation*. He published his discovery as 'new' in theology 'in the same sense as the Newtonian discoveries were new in physics'. According to Warburton, there was in theology but one form of demonstration, the mathematical. It ought to be contained in a single syllogism, for why should not theology be dealt with as any other science? Consequently, there was no room in this system for the mysterious part of the doctrine of the Church, nor for its sacramental observances and supernatural claims. What could not be accounted for was not true or simply did not exist.

It was especially such results of the haughty overestimation of human reason that roused Keble's zeal to bring home to his contemporaries the indispensability of the mysterious but real workings of divine grace. Indeed, the reality of divine grace is Keble's chief contribution to the restatement of the religious principles as they were defended by the leaders of the Oxford Movement. He exerted himself to the utmost to make people aware again of the reality of God and His mysterious grace, of His divine presence in their lives and of the reality of their relation to God. These realities he contrasted with 'the unrealities of this world'. Overestimation of reason was to him the cardinal flaw in the

⁹) KEBLE, Review of The Unpublished Papers of Bishop Warburton, *Occ. Papers and Reviews*, p. 130.

character of modern man. Here was the source of the general perplexity as regards the truth of religion. It was impossible to guide a man's conscience if man did not humbly recognize his ignorance of things 'which were purposely hidden from the wise and revealed to babes'. Man was not to be helped as long as he did not accept that the supernatural must necessarily withdraw itself into a deep mystery impervious to man's reason. Here lay the reason why people were no longer prepared to recognize the authority of the Church. They no longer regarded and respected it as the representative of God on earth to which God had delegated His authority. They rather thought that God had left the world entirely in the charge of man, so that there was not any authority superior to man's.

In the opinion of the Oxford men, there was but one remedy, the return to the fundamental, practical truth about man's relation to God. Men would have to appreciate again what Christ had done for them, they would have to become anxious again not to offend Him. Love and fear ought again to be the chief elements in man's attitude towards God. People should no longer allow these essential facts to be overgrown and overborne by all sorts of intellectual, speculative, theoretical problems. They had to be made aware of the limits of human reason, otherwise they would certainly use it irreverently in their restless curiosity and urge for knowledge. They had to be shown the danger of treating as profane what might be sacred, of slighting divine mysteries because they could not comprehend them, of forfeiting divine grace because they were unable to trace its workings and so would not take sufficient pains to seek it. The only way of escaping from this danger, according to Keble, was to be consciously less ambitious, to be less intellectually proud. People should give up their longing after clearness and completeness in religious matters, for it 'turned men aside from the strait and narrow and sometimes broken way towards some path of human framing' ¹⁰). Clearness and closely-reasoned argument were 'a dear purchase, when Christian truth and duty must be impaired for their sake' ¹¹).

Keble even went so far as to maintain that "superstition is surely a great deal better than irreligion, whatever may be thought of the abstract question, whether it be the safer extreme to believe too much or too little". In his conviction, the loss and error would be found infinitely

¹⁰) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. viii, pp. 356, 357.

¹¹) *id.*, pp. 356, 357.

greater if people trifled with really sacred subjects than if they merely proved to have been a 'little more serious than was necessary' ¹²).

The more the influences of the rationalistic or scientific way of thinking about man and nature showed themselves in the spiritual life of the Church, the stronger became the conviction among the leaders of the Oxford Movement that the only safe way for the Anglican Church was to go back to the way of thinking of the Primitive Church, as represented in the writings of the early Fathers. The contrast between the patristic disposition and the modern approach to theology as demonstrated in the works of thinkers like Middleton, van Mildert, Macknight and Warburton, made a distinction between 'scientific truth' and 'practical truth' absolutely necessary. These writers proclaimed the modern theological axiom that, if Scripture was to be considered a perfect rule of faith, it should be so perfectly clear in all necessary things as to require no interpreter. The gulf between their conception of truth and that of the Church was not likely to be bridged, owing to a marked difference in the first principles underlying them. Ultimately, the whole problem resolved itself into such questions as 'what is reality?', 'what is the use to be made of nature in reaching out for truth?', 'what is the way of attaining knowledge about reality?', 'what is the final object of knowledge?'. In fact, all these questions were merely preparative steps leading up to the crucial point, 'what is the final purpose of life itself?'

Naturally, the manner of dealing with such problems is determined by the personality of the man who sets himself to solve them. In 1870, Newman published his *Grammar of Assent*, an extensive philosophical treatise on the subject, for which he worked out a terminology of his own. Keble, however, was too much of a practical man and too little of a speculative thinker by nature to acknowledge the value of such a theoretical exposition. He started from the conviction that the activities of the human mind must be considered with circumspection. He preferred to submit himself humbly to the fact that man could but grope his way in this world. Still, in spite of their different reactions, it is clear that both Newman and Keble recognized in the over-confident application of the scientific way of thinking to theology the greatest menace to religious faith. It is also clear that they both looked in the same direction for the solution of the problem. To both, 'practical truth' was superior to 'scientific truth', not only because the former was more true to life,

¹²) KEBLE, *Tract 89*, p. 5.

but especially because it actually proved itself to be a motive power and the source of all efficacious human activity.

In the struggle between faith and liberalism, one of the chief points at issue was 'authority'; Church authority over against individual authority. One of the essential questions to be answered was whether it is by his reason, or by 'the guiding force of faith' and by his 'experience of the workings of divine grace', that man is led most safely on his way to happiness.

Before dealing with the various aspects of Keble's practical philosophical approach to the problem of the attainment of truth, we shall first summarize his views of the Church.

Keble's ideas of the Church

Keble's starting-point was the practical truth, based on experience, that the world has not been left to itself. Though it is decayed, the natural world still forms one whole with the supernatural world in the great divine scheme. The one was not more real to him than the other. He greatly regretted that 'this blessed and simple truth should have been so marred in its visible effect, and too often, we may fear, in its intended work on men's souls' ¹³). It was therefore of vital importance to make Christians apprehend the undeniable reality of the truth that Christ has been present in the world ever since His Incarnation. Their belief had to be revived that Christ "is near at hand. You have but to lift up your eyes and look, and behold Jesus Christ visibly set forth, crucified among you. He is in His Church, He is in His Scriptures, He is in your prayers, He is most especially in His Sacraments" ¹⁴). In Keble's parochial sermons there are many descriptive passages in which he endeavoured to bring both the concrete historical facts of Christ's earthly life and their supernatural meaning nearer to his audience. He tried to make his parishioners feel and experience that what Christ had done, and was still doing, concerned each of them personally. Thus, he hoped, their membership of Christ's Mystical Body might again become a living reality to them, a stimulating practical truth, not a dead notion.

He taught them to see Christ's Mystical Body in the Church Universal, the community of all the baptized of all nations and all generations, the departed souls included, ever since the first Pentecost. To this Church

¹³) KEBLE, *On Eucharistical Adoration*, ch. iv.

¹⁴) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. i, s. 6, p. 65.

of the Apostles sacramental grace and the 'depositum fidei' have been entrusted right down from the time of Christ, and God has promised the Holy Spirit to it to guide it to all truth. Consequently, Apostolic Succession has always been the divinely appointed safeguard of the integrity of the Sacraments, and the Sacraments in their turn are again the safeguards of the integrity of the fundamental doctrines.

It is worth noting that Keble gave sacramental grace priority to doctrine. This is typical of Keble's standpoint, for he even made it the essential point in his so-called Anglican theory of Church unity¹⁵). Here it is sufficient to say that he considered Apostolic Succession indispensable in guarding the treasure of sound doctrine, because it is the successors of the Apostles who have the Holy Spirit dwelling in them especially for the custody of the orthodox faith, i.e. the fundamentals of doctrine and practice. However, he thought it necessary to add that this grace does not imply infallible authority¹⁶).

In the Universal Church Keble recognized two provinces of evangelical teaching, the Bible and Tradition. These two are in perfect harmony, for Tradition teaches and the Bible proves; Tradition teaches the sufficiency of the written Word and the Bible confirms and illustrates what Tradition teaches¹⁷).

In contradistinction to the opinion then rapidly gaining ground, that the voice of Tradition had better be disregarded, Keble maintained that Bible and Tradition were inversely complementary. He denied expressly that only the Bible constitutes the religion of reformed Christians. Tradition, he thought, had always counterbalanced the 'irreverent use of reason'. Its task had always been to prevent those who preferred to be 'left alone with their Bibles' from abusing their supposed liberty of interpretation first by explaining away the mysterious meaning, and afterwards by lowering or evading the supernatural authority of the Scriptures¹⁸).

In illustration of the harmonious interrelation between Bible and Tradition, Keble pointed to an analogous case in daily life which everybody could know from their own experience. In life we receive our first impressions of a religious truth from testimony, he said, but we are expected to use observation to confirm or correct this impression. We

¹⁵) cf. Ch. II, pp. 38 ff.

¹⁶) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, Postscript to s. viii, pp. 372-375.

¹⁷) id., p. 381.

¹⁸) id., pp. 358 ff.

cannot long depend on either quite alone. Consequently, Keble thought that the final cause of the harmony between the Bible and Tradition was to indicate that life is a period of moral probation, a period in which man must try to arrive at the truth, not merely by accepting the testimony of it, but by finding out its value in the practical experience of everyday life ¹⁹).

The Bible is the chief source of all religious belief. Nobody can pretend to understand the Gospel, Keble taught, 'except he have a deep and serious sense of his own and the world's condition without it, as being a condition of misery and ruin' ²⁰). But for Revelation it would be impossible for man to know his condition in this world. Without the Gospel the very best man could but reach wretchedness, for apart from Revelation 'there is nothing that can either make men truly good, or put away the terrors of God's wrath'.

Keble did not deny the reality of natural religion. He even took it for his starting-point in his description of the way in which man participates in the act of faith, but he had seen too many aberrations resulting from its overestimation not to warn his contemporaries against any one-sided exaggeration ²¹).

The Bible, consisting of the two Testaments, forms one whole in meaning and effect. The Old Testament is 'the shadow or figure' of the New, the one looking forward to Christ, the other looking back to Him ²²). The New Testament is in nothing contrary to the Old, but the former is the confirmation and extension of the latter. Keble even read a psychological meaning in the order in which the two were given. "The corruption of mankind is the prominent doctrine of the Old Testament, the redemption of the New. The truths most repellent and distressing to human nature, but continually presented to our view in real life, are cautiously and fully impressed upon the mind before it is invited to dwell upon the more elevating half of the Gospel. The degree of acceptance which the divine method of instruction meets with will always be in proportion to the humbleness and self-denial of the learner and to his just sense of moral obligation" ²³). It is a common mistake to consider the Gospel as a dispensation of mercy only, and to forget the terrors of the Lord which are revealed in it. This mistake can only be

¹⁹) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, Postscript to s. viii, p. 352.

²⁰) KEBLE, *Studia Sacra*, p. 62.

²¹) id., pp. 69-78.

²²) cf. *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. i, s. 31, pp. 311-313.

²³) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. i, pp. 13-14.

corrected by accepting Holy Scripture as one whole, both the Old and the New Testament ²⁴).

From the above it will already have appeared that Keble was particularly fond of setting forth the importance of the Old Testament. He thought it 'confirms authoritatively the plain dictates of conscience in matters of civil wisdom and duty' ²⁵). He always turned to it when public duties, errors and dangers were in question, as was so often the case during his life-time. The manner in which the Old Testament is quoted in the New suggested to him 'that, as regards reward and punishment, God dealt formerly with the Jewish people in a manner analogous to that in which He deals now, not so much with Christian nations, but with the souls of individual Christians' ²⁶). This analogy arose, he said, 'out of the fact that Christians severally are what the Jews were collectively, namely partakers of a special Covenant' ²⁷).

The truths and doings necessary for man's salvation have been settled by the Spirit of God and entrusted to the Apostles and their successors. That is the reason why the Church Universal will never go wrong. It will go on teaching what has been taught and practised in the whole Church as the true meaning of the Bible from the time of the Apostles. These truths, Keble maintained, have been settled once for all. Therefore he refused to admit that theology allows of any development in the scientific meaning of the word. He was convinced that it was a fundamental mistake to regard theology as a science, however much his contemporaries wanted to deal with it as such. In his opinion, there was in the substance of the faith no such thing as discovery or evolution of new truths, as there is in science. In a science any truth may be used as a premiss for a following syllogism. In religion, however, it is totally different. The substance of the faith is outside the scope of man's reasoning power. This does not mean, of course, that men need not use their reason in seeking religious truth. As to religious truths, men can but submit to the facts as they are revealed by God, explained on His authority by the Universal Church and put into practice by the Ancient Church. It is not God's intention that they should be accounted for or fitted into a system designed by man. Scripture simply states that a number of facts are necessary for salvation. It does not say anywhere

²⁴) cf. KEBLE, *Studia Sacra*, p. 62.

²⁵) KEBLE, *Serm. National Apostasy*, ed. Mowbray, p. 6.

²⁶) id., pp. 5-6.

²⁷) cf. KEBLE, *Tract 13*, passim.

that people must be able to show why these facts are necessary. As soon as Christians have found these facts, they must accept them, whether they can account for them or not. They must at once begin to live according to them, confidently awaiting the effect of them in their lives. Then they will undoubtedly experience their practical value. This practical experience of the truth Keble called 'full knowledge', and he preached and interpreted what he meant by 'living according to the facts' as being the practice of attentiveness, obedience and self-denial. He said it was all a matter of 'having the good will to do God's will unreservedly', for then 'we shall know of the doctrine' ²⁸⁾).

The decayed and disunited condition of the Church Universal is, of course, greatly to be regretted. It is a consequence of the many sins of mankind that the Church is broken up into three portions, separated from each other as regards formal and acknowledged communion. In spite of this, however, God will always have on earth a kingdom of persons sacramentally united to His Son. He wants to be present in His Church to teach it, and guide it to all truth. He wants to use it as an instrument for the distribution of heavenly grace through His Sacraments. The Sacraments are the only means of communion with Christ as long as we are in this world ²⁹⁾). Just because there is no visible unity in the Church Universal, Keble thought it of the greatest importance always to remember and cling to Apostolical Succession. The Apostolical ministry is the only channel of sacramental grace by which all Christians are bound together. It is the Sacraments which first make, and afterwards keep, Christians members of Christ and children of the Father by real inward sanctifying grace. Therefore, it is by communion with the successors of the Apostles that the mystical, but no less real, union among Christians may be preserved ³⁰⁾). The Sacraments are the foundation on which Keble built his Anglican theory of Church unity. He thought it quite conceivable that the promises to the Church 'are conditional like those to individuals'. By this he meant to say that the external notes promised to the Church, for instance visible unity, might very well be dependent on the inward and spiritual privilege of sanctity. If this was true, no visible unity could be expected before Christians had first conquered sin and had made great progress on their way to holiness. On the ground of this 'probability', it was the first duty of each individual

²⁸⁾ KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, Preface, pp. ii, iii.

²⁹⁾ cf. *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. viii, s. 38, pp. 399 ff.

³⁰⁾ cf. KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, Preface, pp. xlv-xlvii.

Christian, Keble concluded, to try and realize Christ's Presence by doing all that lies in his power to recover the fulness of grace, thus contributing his share to the promotion of visible unity of the Church ³¹).

Another characteristic point of view of Keble in this connection is that he held that God made His promises to the Apostles collectively, to the whole Episcopate through St. Peter. He thought the notion of each Bishop's independence, which he called Cyprianic, as legitimate a development of the original Apostolic idea as the notion of the whole Episcopate being providentially gathered into a single see. In his opinion, it was nothing more than a matter of applying the divine promise. "If you say there is supernatural security in the promise through St. Peter, applying it to the Roman see, why may we not as well apply that promise, as St. Cyprian seems to have done, to the whole Episcopate?" It was Keble's conviction that a loyal and affectionate sense of union would not be at all impaired by such an arrangement ³²).

The Apostles and their successors must therefore be regarded as the centre of union. Their collective authority is required to make laws of universal obligation and promote the 'well-being' of the Church. Although it is highly regrettable that this authority has already been suspended for many centuries, it does not follow that there should necessarily be any defect of guidance in essentials. Keble thought it quite probable that, before the time of the disunion, events had already been so ordered providentially that all truths and practices generally necessary for salvation were sufficiently established in the rule of faith of the whole Church. In all such matters the several portions of the Church Universal should continue to agree. In Keble's eyes, this agreement was so evident and unquestionable that it could be ascertained even by the simplest Christian ³³). The facts which are recognized by all the Churches and registered in their Creeds are beyond all dispute. Just like the fundamental truths of natural religion, they are to be received implicitly and at all costs. These revealed truths are not to be judged by man, but simply to be accepted and to be made measures or standards for judging points outside the Creeds ³⁴). The points in which the Anglican Church differs from the two other branches are, in his opinion, only details, not matters of principle. They are waiting for a General

³¹) cf. KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. xii, pp. 309 ff.

³²) cf. id., Preface, pp. xlv-xlvii.

³³) cf. id., Preface, pp. xxxix-xlii.

³⁴) cf. KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. iii, pp. 62 ff.

Council to settle them. As long as such an authoritative Council is 'providentially in abeyance', all Christians have to go on appealing to it, meanwhile submitting their judgment to that portion of the Church Universal with which they are in communion by God's appointment. "We can but continue as we are in those points of our Creed which other portions of the Church dispute, unless we can be proved [of course Keble meant by 'proved' convinced on the strength of 'practical experience'] to be wrong, not denying their life and catholicity, but maintaining our own with submission to the whole Church" ³⁵).

These are roughly Keble's ideas about the Church Universal. He founded his conviction that the Church of England is a living branch of it, on the following four facts which were, according to him, quite incontestable: 1. The Bishops and ministers of the Church of England are successors of Christ's Apostles. 2. The Anglican Church possesses at least the two Sacraments by which men can become members of Christ's Mystical Body and remain in close contact with it. 3. It acknowledges the same Scriptures and Creeds as did the whole Church in its days of perfect union. 4. It prays constantly for the actual reunion with the other two branches.

Keble readily admitted that a religious communion can only lay claim to forming part of Christ's Mystical Body, if it can demonstrate its connectedness with the Church Universal through Apostolical Succession; that it depends on this succession for the validity of its Sacraments and the integrity of its fundamental doctrines. However, he did not admit that this demonstration was a matter of logical or historical proofs. He maintained that it could only be proved by experience whether the Church of England was really a distributor of life-giving and sanctifying grace. This was the only sufficient proof of its being a living branch of Christ's Church Universal. The existence of the Anglican Church was an incontestable fact, as incontestable as the other fact that Anglicans were providentially placed in their Church; for the rest it was to him just a matter of 'natural' piety that English Churchmen should acknowledge their Church as a 'real mother'. To feel any doubt about it was, according to him, nothing but ingratitude and irreverence in those persons who 'cannot deny that there may be a devout and unwearied use of the means of grace offered among us'. As for the

³⁵) cf. KEBLE, *On Eucharistical Adoration*, pp. 176-178.

persons who have so far neglected these means of grace, they are, in his opinion, not in a position to judge or compare ³⁶⁾).

There was no denying that the Church of England was in a decayed condition. It was broken up into sects and parties, some religious, others political. The mentality of a great many Churchmen, both clergy and laity, was affected by the rationalistic and liberal spirit of the age. By this the position of the Church had been undermined, so that it was, indeed, in a very distressing spiritual condition. Nothing less than a warfare was going on between the Church and the world, between believers and unbelievers. Since the Reform Bill, the encroachments of the State had become a growing danger to what remained of the independence of the Church in spiritual and ecclesiastical matters. The weakened Church failed to make a firm stand against the aggressive attitude of the State. "The Church has in these later ages been gradually growing imperfect and languid in her discharge of both her duties. She has not shown her ancient bold front to the civil power when profane or encroaching. She has not kept her old jealous watch against utilitarian breaches of order, or philosophical perversion of truth within her precincts" ³⁷⁾. More or less unconsciously, it had suffered its doctrines to be distorted 'to make them prove more useful and appear more refined and enlightened' ³⁸⁾. Indeed, the Church of England 'was in extreme peril of sacrificing apostolical prerogative to political expediency, and apostolical truth to rationalistic ingenuity' ³⁹⁾. An ever increasing number of persons seemed to think they might 'choose their own religion according to their own fancy of what will most edify themselves' and run after 'strange teachers, without regard or reverence to the warnings of the Church' ⁴⁰⁾. Others again 'are so disgusted at seeing such liberties taken with such very holy things [here Keble refers to the Sacraments and the way they were looked upon, for instance in the Gorham case ⁴¹⁾] that they begin to think the Body which allows them can be no part of the true Church of Christ, and so they wander away to the Roman Catholics . . .' ⁴²⁾.

Keble's sermons are full of such passages describing the chaotic con-

³⁶⁾ cf. KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, Preface, pp. iii, iv.

³⁷⁾ id., s. ix, pp. 239 ff.

³⁸⁾ id., s. ix, pp. 239 ff.

³⁹⁾ id., p. 239.

⁴⁰⁾ *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. v, s. 10, pp. 111-112.

⁴¹⁾ cf. Ch. III, pp. 65 ff.

⁴²⁾ *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. iii, s. 35, p. 358.

dition of the Anglican Church. He wanted people to see the great dangers and the real points at issue in all the controversies. The essential question was, "Is the Church, mingled as we see it of good and bad, a supernatural body, separated off from the world to live a supernatural life, begun, continued and ended in miracles — miracles as real as any of those which befell the Israelites in the wilderness — as real, but infinitely more gracious and awful? — or is it only a body providentially raised up to hold the best and purest philosophy — helped as all good things are from above, but in itself no more than the heroical and divine phase of this present life?"⁴³).

Recognition of the divine character of the Church, Keble expected, would naturally bring with it submission to its authority. People who 'pretended to the honour of being God's fellow-labourers in building up the holy household of which Christ is the Head Corner Stone'⁴⁴), would willingly accept the whole plan of the Church as it was ordained from the beginning. They would understand that the only safe way is to take God's will exactly as it is to be found in the Scriptures and as it is interpreted by the Church of the Apostles. Man's love of Christ is only to be measured by his agreement with the substance of the doctrine as it was first preached by the Apostles and carried on by Tradition. Such people would realize that the continuation of the Church of England as a divine institution depends entirely on its communion with the Universal Church, and that this communion implies keeping hold of Apostolical Succession and Tradition.

One of the chief reasons why rationalists reject Apostolical Succession was, according to Keble, because it is a mystery. They cannot bring themselves to believe, he said, that God has made 'the spiritual welfare of one man dependent on the manner in which another executed his trust'⁴⁵). Keble met their objection by pointing out to them such analogous facts as they could see around them every day, for instance that the moral condition of children is influenced by the conduct of their parents, and the condition of subjects by the conduct of their rulers. Besides, he warned English Churchmen against such consequences of dispensing with Apostolical Succession as were clearly visible, he said, in the Lutheran Churches of North Germany, the Presbyterian or Reformed Churches in Switzerland, Holland and Scotland, in their

⁴³) KEBLE, *On Eucharistical Adoration*, Preface to the 2nd ed., p. xiv.

⁴⁴) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. vii, p. 166.

⁴⁵) id., Postscript to s. viii, p. 366.

offshoots in France, Germany, England and Ireland, in the Congregational or Independent Churches in England and America. He had found that all these Churches were characterized by a great unsteadiness and vacillation in their doctrinal views, even on those points which contain the very essence of the faith⁴⁶). Apparently, these people thought themselves free to choose the form in which they wanted to serve Christ, with the result that some seemed to believe that, in their relation to God, sentiment, feeling, attachment to God was everything, and that definite notions about Christ's Person, Nature and Office might very well be dispensed with. If only they were inclined to rely entirely upon Him for their salvation, it was not necessary to believe in mysteries like the Trinity, the Incarnation and communion with Christ through His Sacraments. Of course, Keble said, he refrained from passing judgment on such questions as whether Christians who have no Bishops belong to the Church or not. His standpoint was, "We are not judging others, but deciding on our own conduct. We in England cannot communicate with Presbyterians, as neither we can with Roman Catholics, but we do not therefore exclude either from salvation. 'Necessary to salvation' and 'necessary to Church communion' are not to be used as convertible terms"⁴⁷). However, so much was at any rate perfectly clear to him, that whenever Apostolical Succession failed, doctrinal truth was immediately in great danger. Experience had taught him that for the integrity of the truth the Church was fully dependent on the ministerial grace derived from Apostolical Succession.

Up to the nineteenth century, Apostolical Succession had always been recognized in the Church of England. According to Keble, there had always been authoritative persons in the Established Church who, in spite of Erastian principles, maintained that there had been an uninterrupted succession of governors in the Church of England with apostolical authority⁴⁸). It could not be denied that at the same time there had always been many Anglican ministers — and under rationalistic influences their number was increasing — who were insufficiently aware of their Church being a supernatural body. In defending their commission, they rested their claims mistakenly on their general duty of submission to the State, and on their duty of helping to promote order and decency, instead of appealing to Apostolical Succession. As long as

⁴⁶) KEBLE, *Tract 57*, passim.

⁴⁷) KEBLE, *Tract 4*, pp. 5, 6.

⁴⁸) cf. KEBLE, Preface to Hooker's *Works*, pp. lix-lx.

it did not seem to make all the difference to them whether the ministerial prerogatives in their Church were to be traced to a divine institution or to some arbitrary ecclesiastical arrangement, these clergymen were to be held responsible for the coldness and indifference prevalent among so many laymen as regards the privilege of belonging to the Apostolical Church ⁴⁹⁾).

4 # In the autumn of 1836, Keble was invited to preach on the occasion of the Archdeacon's visitation in Winchester Cathedral. He availed himself of this opportunity to give an exposition of what he thought Tradition should mean to Anglicans. Among other things, he gave it as his opinion that the 23rd Article 'virtually' enforced Apostolical Succession as the test of a lawful ministry. If we look at the very vague wording of this Article ⁵⁰⁾, it is evident that Keble interpreted it in a Catholic sense. Indeed, nothing else could be expected of him, because to him the mysterious and the mystical were the very essence of religion. It is not at all surprising that several years later on he willingly took the responsibility of Newman's publication of *Tract no. 90*, in which a Catholic interpretation of the Thirty-nine Articles was worked out.

Just like Apostolical Succession, Tradition, too, was regarded with great aversion by many people. Rationalists considered it as something mystical, and as such they thought it ought to be rejected.

In the opening sections of *Tract 89*, Keble showed how in the attitude towards the Fathers of the Ancient Church there had been a gradual change from feigned respect to downright disdain on account of their so-called 'mysticism'. Keble entitled his Tract *On the Mysticism attributed to the early Fathers of the Church*. A short summary may be given here of this striking and illustrative development as noticed by Keble.

In 1632, Daillé had published his treatise *Of the right use of the Fathers* ⁵¹⁾, in which, Keble remarked in the opening section of *Tract 89*,

⁴⁹⁾ cf. KEBLE, *Tract 4*, pp. 2 ff.

⁵⁰⁾ The 23rd Article stipulates: "It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of publick preaching, or ministering the sacraments in the Congregation, before he be lawfully called, and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men who have publick authority given unto them in the Congregation, to call and send Ministers into the Lord's vineyard."

⁵¹⁾ Jean Daillé, 'Ministre du Saint Evangile en l'Eglise Reformée de Paris', published his *Traicté de l'Employ des Saints Peres, pour le Jugement des differends, qui sont aujourd'hui en la Religion* in Geneva (Pierre Aubert) in 1632. Keble says it was in 1631. English translation by T. Smith, printed by John Martin

the writer impaired the Fathers' credit, while at the same time he professed the greatest respect for their sanctity and wisdom. This work made Daillé the standard author in the opinion of all who advocated rationalization both in ecclesiastical practice and in theological inquiry.

Among the authors continuing his line of conduct in the eighteenth century Keble mentioned Whitby and Middleton. The former collected a number of specimens of patristic exposition of the Scriptures, the latter published a flippant treatise on the subject called *Free Inquiry*. Both were much more openly defiant than Daillé. They apparently wrote with the avowed purpose of impugning the Fathers' credit in all questions of Christian religion. Middleton even asserted that he was able to prove that the ancient Fathers 'were of a character from which nothing could be expected but what a weak or crafty understanding could supply towards confirming those prejudices with which they happened to be possessed, especially where religion was the subject' ⁵²).

In the nineteenth century, it appeared to be the normal course to dispose of the authority of the Fathers by calling them 'mystics'. This term was used, Keble said, to denote either 'a disposition to regard things as supernatural which are not really so . . . or a disposition to strain what may perhaps be really supernatural in an undue and extravagant way'. Keble added that this was the judgment of self-opiniated people who had not any acquaintance with the writings of the Fathers beyond some vague impressions of their works. At most, they possessed a doubtful second-hand knowledge which they had derived from reports or quotations. Keble showed that he knew his adversaries well enough to see through their intentions in using the term 'mysticism'. He pointed out that by choosing this word they 'set the Fathers down gently but effectively'. 'Gentleness and contempt were dexterously mixed in it'. People who were sure to shrink from the coarse sneers of Middleton or Gibbon, would readily acquiesce in this accusation. It implied 'some sort of confusion between physical and moral, or between visible and spiritual agency', confusions which were pardonable in ignorant and credulous persons, but 'abhorrent to those who piqued themselves on their clear and well-defined ideas and on their power of analysing any effects into their proper causes'. The term denoted, or rather insinuated, a charge of 'deliberate fraud'. It conveyed the 'notion

in 1651, 2nd ed. 1675. Re-edited and amended by G. Jekyll, 1843. Keble wrote *Tract 89* before 1841.

⁵²) MIDDLETON, Preface to *Free Inquiry*, p. xxxii, quoted by Keble in *Tract 89*, p. 2.

of something altogether remote from common sense and practical utility, the two very idols of the age'. Such ideas were absolutely worthless to the man of the world, the practical man or the inductive experimental philosopher. Such people instinctively rejected the way of thinking of the Fathers as 'mere religious dreaming' ⁵³).

One way of rendering this charge null and void was to make the writings of the Fathers accessible again. For that reason Keble stimulated the publication of the *Library of the Fathers*, one of the great achievements of the leaders of the Oxford Movement ⁵⁴). Another way was to make people understand that, besides the rationalistic way of thinking, which was admittedly successful in science, there was a different way of thinking, much better adapted to such practical fields of life as poetry and religion. Keble attempted this in his Oxford *Lectures on Poetry* and other writings ⁵⁵).

The description of this way of thinking will form the subject of the following chapters of this essay. I think that it may be called Keble's chief merit that he has dealt with this theoretical subject in such a practical way. It was no doubt his most valuable contribution to the Oxford Movement that he has endeavoured to open people's eyes to the reality of things beyond the world of sense. He saw very distinctly that the atrophy of man's mystical sense was the chief cause of all coolness and indifference in religious matters. The struggle between faith and science was nothing but the outcome of the antagonism between the recognition of the mysterious as the essence of religion on the one hand, and the desire to have everything settled and certain on the other. In his defence of the mysterious, Keble started from the conviction that fallen man has no right to complete certainty. His contemporaries apparently could not believe without having absolute certainty. Keble saw it as his task to make them see that certainty or intellectual satisfaction would not leave any room for faith.

⁵³) cf. KEBLE, *Tract 89*, pp. 2 ff.

⁵⁴) The *Library* was started in 1836 by NEWMAN, KEBLE and PUSEY. Keble contributed a translation of St. Irenaeus, published after his death.

⁵⁵) see esp. Ch. III and IV of this essay.

CHAPTER III

MORAL SENSE

PROBABILITY. FAITH, IMPLICIT AND REAL

In the preceding chapter we have sketched in broad outline the undermining influences of the rationalistic mentality on the recognition of the authority of the Anglican Church. This Church was less and less regarded as an institution deriving its authority wholly from God, because God was supposed to have withdrawn from the world. The assumption that He had left the world entirely in the charge of man readily led to the conclusion that there was no authority in the world superior to that of man himself. Secularization and rational leanings in religion were the natural results of the generally diffused idea of man's self-sufficiency and independence. Such ideas could not fail to weaken man's consciousness of his relation to God.

We have already noticed in passing that there is a striking agreement between the ideas which Newman worked out in his *Grammar of Assent* and those which formed the basis of Keble's conception of the attainment of truth. The two leaders of the Oxford Movement agreed that a clear distinction had to be made between scientific truth and practical truth in order to prevent the scientific way of thinking from being applied to matters of religion. They considered this to be the chief menace to faith. Just like Newman, Keble wanted to emphasize that in science only a notional or purely intellectual assent is given to a truth, which assent is the result of a logical demonstration. As they were convinced that this form of assent will never be able to serve as a motive power to action, they pointed to the necessity of a totally different approach to practical truth. Otherwise religion, which was primarily a practical matter to them, could never be experienced as the strongest operative influence in life, which it was originally meant to be.

This agreement between Keble and Newman, both as regards the source of all the difficulties and as to the remedy to be applied, is an indication that their ideas on the acquisition of knowledge about reality are the very roots from which the Oxford Movement sprang. Their

ideas were founded on the conviction, diametrically opposed to the rationalistic interpretation of human nature, that man has a faculty which enables him to go beyond the limits of the mind and transcend the field of natural experience.

If then the intellectual approach to religion is inefficacious, how is man to accept a religious truth? What is the faculty that enables him to make an act of faith? Or is faith exclusively the result of the workings of God's grace, so that man is supposed to be only passive? If man has a share in the act of faith, does he make it once for all, or is he continuously called upon to make new acts of faith in the course of his life? In other words, is faith to be regarded as an existential act?

In this and the following chapter we shall give Keble's answers to these questions. In none of his writings does he set forth his ideas in a coherent way. His views are scattered all over his works. What he said about them in his tracts and sermons will be put together in this chapter. His theory of poetry, which he developed in order to throw light on the same problems, will be discussed in the next.

It is at once evident how much Keble was indebted for his opinions to Bishop Butler, the author of the *Analogy*¹). This is hardly to be wondered at, for in the nineteenth century Butler's writings on moral philosophy were held in high esteem in the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. They were officially accepted as standard works on the subject.

These writings comprise, beside the *Analogy*, a volume of *Sermons* preceded by an instructive preface, and two *Dissertations*, from which his religious and moral systems may be collected²). As Keble and Newman both acknowledged their indebtedness to this theological philosopher, it may be worth while giving here a brief summary of Butler's fundamental principles and his train of thought. It cannot be denied that his ideas formed a substantial part of the philosophical basis on which the Oxford Movement was founded.

Although Butler dealt with his subjects in a purely speculative way, he distinguished himself in many respects from the average rationalistic thinker of his time. His contemporaries looked upon human reason as the faculty for making abstractions, for establishing principles and con-

¹) JOSEPH BUTLER, *The Analogy of Religion, natural and revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature*, first publ. 1736.

²) These *Dissertations* entitled *On Personal Identity* and *On the Nature of Virtue* were originally included in the *Analogy*, but in later editions they were usually printed separately. cf. W. E. Gladstone's edition, Oxford 1897.

structing systems. Their aim was speculative and scientific truth, and the truth, which they attained by means of their reason, was accepted by them as certain and incontestable as long as the reverse had not been proved. They ignored or neglected the operative value of truth, that is to say, they were less interested in its power to stimulate man to act in accordance with the truth that he had found. Butler, however, stressed the practical side of life and believed in the motive power of the feelings when excited by man's natural surroundings. Man's relations to the external world played a far greater part in his interpretation of human nature than was common in the eighteenth century. In this respect especially, he was far in advance of his times. In opposition to many of his contemporaries, he did not overestimate human reason, on the contrary, he was convinced of man's ignorance. In his method of reasoning he did not start from any preconceived notions of his own, as so many rationalists did, but he held that all knowledge is to be obtained through experience gained by means of the senses and the feelings. He looked for evidence of his experience in the testimony of other people or in the nature of things themselves.

Butler regarded man's inner constitution as a kind of mechanism consisting of various 'instincts, appetites and propensities'. These qualities, he taught, should all be controlled by the conscience or moral sense. God has evidently implanted these faculties in human nature to enable man to respond properly to his surroundings. Here we have one of the many indications showing that in Butler's attitude of mind the universe forms one harmonious whole. Such an attitude is characteristic of the nineteenth rather than of the eighteenth century. In contradistinction to various forms of Deism, he recognized God's presence in the natural government of the world.

By relating man's inner constitution to the external situation in which he is placed, Butler thought he could discern for what course of action man is fitted out, what man's duties are with respect to his surroundings, and what stimulates him to do his duty. He came to the conclusion that man is made for virtue, that it is his duty to act in accordance with the dictates of his conscience, and that his longing for happiness is the strongest stimulant for doing his duty. Listening to one's conscience means to act in accordance with one's original nature. Virtue, he maintained, consists in 'affection to and pursuit of what is right and good as such'. It means following one's nature, because man has at his disposal all the faculties necessary to promote his own happiness. If the term is rightly understood, self-love may be said to be the main source

of man's actions. Under the guidance of conscience, self-love is the instinct which is not impulsive in following its own desire, but which is reflective and intent on performing the will of God ³). Butler never taught that personal gratification is the only end of every human act.

It may be inferred from Butler's introduction to his *Analogy* that the principle of analogy was suggested to him by the writings of Origen ⁴). In Butler's hands it became a kind of inductive reasoning, only differing from induction in degree. In his edition, Gladstone defined analogical reasoning as looking for 'a resemblance of qualitative relations'. This resemblance, he explained, need not be perfect. It is sufficient if the relations are marked and substantive ⁵). Such reasoning never leads to demonstrative evidence or certainty. Butler was convinced that man does not deserve certainty here on earth. He maintained that probability is the highest form of knowledge attainable by fallen man. Owing to our ignorance, we are unable to judge of God's complete scheme. We may understand certain rules and laws in it, but we cannot know whether such rules represent the whole plan.

Butler did not aim at proving the truth of religion. He took that truth for granted. His only purpose was to confirm it by pointing to the marked resemblance of the principles of religion to those of nature. Starting from that aspect of reality which he knew from experience, he went on to the other aspect of God's sublime scheme which he supposed to run parallel to it. The close correspondence between the natural and the moral world, in other words, between natural and supernatural reality, is one of Butler's principles which helped to determine Keble's outlook on life. Keble found in it, at is were, a philosophical confirmation of the theological principle of economy which he had learned from the Fathers.

Butler based man's expectations of a future life on the feelings of hope and fear; hope of reward and fear of punishment. He argued that in life we find that misery and happiness are the results of our actions. On the whole, he said, similar causes produce similar effects. So we are able to predict with great probability the favourable or unfavourable consequences of our deeds. In the future life the same law will pre-

³) cf. BUTLER, *Sermon ii*, §§ 15, 16; cf. *Analogy*, ed. Gladstone, Part i, ch. v, p. 38.

⁴) BUTLER, *Analogy*, Introduction, § 8, p. 8.

⁵) see Gladstone's edition of the *Analogy*, p. 8, footnote 1. This edition may be regarded as a kind of official protest against the fact that Butler was no longer put on the list of books prescribed by the University of Oxford. cf. R. D. MIDDLETON, *Newman at Oxford*, O.U.P., 1950, p. 38.

sumably be operative. So, just as prudence is necessary to ensure our temporal happiness, virtue is necessary to ensure eternal happiness. Both prudence and virtue are implanted in human nature for this very purpose. From the close correspondence between the natural and the moral world it may be concluded that natural life is a state of probation, discipline and improvement in preparation for a future life. The feelings of hope and fear result in obedience to God's decrees. They are the disposition from which our acts proceed. Butler recommended resignation and self-denial as 'barriers against the bias of self-love' and as useful forms of training our patience. "Dutiful submission, together with the active principle of obedience make up the temper and character in us, which answer to his [God's] sovereignty" ⁶⁾).

From this summary of Butler's leading ideas it will be clear how great their influence was on Keble's personality. They are all reflected in his outlook on life: man's ignorance, the principle of probability, the analogy between the natural and the supernatural, the stress on obedience and self-denial, the moral sense. Of course, Keble did not adopt all these ideas in exactly the same form as he found them in Butler's works. His different personality, especially his spiritual disposition, caused him to transform and apply them in his own way. Besides, in his application of them he was undoubtedly influenced by the new ideas about the attainment of knowledge which were a contribution of the early romantic poets to the development of metaphysical thought.

Keble called Butler 'one of the safest teachers of religion, both natural and revealed, that ever blessed this Church'. He venerated him as the outstanding Anglican authority who carried on the Catholic traditions of the Caroline Divines ⁷⁾ in the religiously barren eighteenth century. He highly appreciated the *Analogy*, because it was to him 'altogether a practical work, which aimed not at satisfying the mind, but at forming the heart and guiding the conduct, though the mind should remain unsatisfied' ⁸⁾).

In so far as there is any philosophical basis to Keble's way of thinking, this basis is due to Butler, who was probably the only philosopher Keble studied very closely when he was inquiring into the true nature of religion

⁶⁾ BUTLER, *Analogy*, ed. Gladstone, bk. i, ch. v, § 39, p. 111.

⁷⁾ A group of seventeenth century Anglican theologians. LAUD, COSIN, FORBES, MONTAGUE, SPARROW, THORNDIKE, TAYLOR and KEN are the most important among them. They vindicated the Catholicity of the Church of England.

⁸⁾ KEBLE, Review of The Unpublished Papers of Bishop Warburton, *Occ. Papers & Reviews*, p. 127.

and the nature of the moral faculty. At Oxford he will no doubt have read Plato and Aristotle as was the custom, but he mentions them only once or twice outside his *Lectures on Poetry*⁹⁾. Locke and Hume he rejected on account of their rationalism and scepticism. German and French philosophers had hardly any influence in England during Keble's formative period. They tended to be excluded all through the first half of the nineteenth century. Only after 1850 did the University of Oxford begin to promote the study of the various continental systems¹⁰⁾. Long before that time, however, the poet S. T. Coleridge had visited Germany with a view to studying German philosophy. Keble may have come into contact with his ideas through his friend and later biographer, Sir J. T. Coleridge, a nephew and great admirer of the poet. In his *Memoir of John Keble*, the latter wrote about their years together at college, "We lived on the most familiar terms with each other: we might be, indeed we were, somewhat boyish in manner . . . but our interest in literature, ancient and modern, and in all the stirring matters of that stirring time was not boyish — we debated the classic and romantic question, we discussed Poetry and history, logic and philosophy . . ." ¹¹⁾. Anyhow, Keble's interest in poetry will no doubt have brought him into touch with the philosophic ideas propagated by the romantic poets, who were also seeking for an entirely different basis for morality, religion and philosophy itself. Although these indirect influences may very well have played their part, it is a fact that Keble only acknowledged his indebtedness to Butler, and even Butler's influence was not so much felt in the sphere of thought as in that of practical life. The same is true with respect to Plato and Aristotle. In one of his academic sermons Keble referred to the spiritual and practical significance of their philosophical ideas, saying, "Neither they themselves, nor the Providence which guided them both, ever intended their works as a full exhibition of all that might be known of human happiness and duty, but as a practical introduction to the only right way of studying that momentous subject". He then went on to explain that in his system Aristotle had defined happiness as consisting in the 'everlasting contemplation of the highest object that can come before the understanding of man', and that it was 'attainable by the discipline of moral virtue'. Keble pointed out to his

⁹⁾ see Ch. IV of this essay.

¹⁰⁾ cf. V. F. STORR, *The Development of English theology in the 19th century*, Longmans 1913, p. 28, p. 150.

¹¹⁾ J. T. COLERIDGE, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

audience that Aristotle had already observed that happiness was 'level to the capacity of every man', and he inferred from this contention that happiness must therefore be 'much more nearly universal than we, from our habit of regarding it merely a part of a scholastic theory, are generally apt to imagine'. With respect to Aristotle's point of view he added significantly, "A remarkable acknowledgement this, to come from one of the greatest masters of reasoning, in deference to what may be called unreasoning faith in the final good effects of virtue". Speaking about Plato, Keble said that this great thinker had even come much nearer to the idea of 'personal communion with the Deity and with higher orders of created spirits, as constituting the true chief good of a reasonable creature'. Purposely abstracting from all traditional notions of natural religion, both philosophers had adapted their arguments to 'such sceptical reasoners as disdained to be guided, in any measure, by obscure tradition, and what they would call superstitious fancy'. They had taken for granted, however, that even such reasoners could not resist 'the dictates of experience and analogy', unless they should give up their common sense altogether ¹²).

As Keble's contemporaries were hardly less sceptical than theirs had been, he followed their example. The tenets of the Deists were still winning rather than losing ground. Too many of the leading Anglican Churchmen refused to be satisfied with less than absolute certainty in religious matters. Therefore, Keble would endeavour to undertake what Butler had done in the eighteenth century, 'to stop the mouths of a sceptical and too argumentative generation by referring them to their own common sense, their own constant practice, in matters of mere worldly and temporal interest' ¹³).

By according this prominent place to common sense, Keble met his contemporaries more than half-way for, ever since the eighteenth century, this had been the most praised faculty of man. True, it was generally felt to be directed exclusively to material happiness, but Keble would try to make people see that God had endowed every man with this faculty for his eternal happiness as well. By means of his common sense, if rightly understood, man was able to re-establish his relation to God. With it he could attain knowledge about reality in the fullest sense of the term, about material and immaterial reality, about his own

¹²) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. ii, pp. 26-31.

¹³) *id.*, p. 29.

position in this reality and about God, who is the final object of all knowledge and of life itself.

One of Keble's fundamental principles is that Revelation is indispensable and that natural religion is insufficiently definite to serve as an authoritative basis of religious practice. He started from the supposition that, in spite of all their intellectual doubts as to the mysterious and unintelligible facts contained in the Bible, his contemporaries generally acknowledged that the world is under moral government, for it was God Himself, who had revealed that important truth to man. Keble was clearly making a stand against certain groups of Deists, when he wrote in his *Studia Sacra*, "No sophistry can argue God's plain declarations out of the Bible, that He will judge the world by the rules there laid down. To expect impunity after such clear and full warnings is no better than downright Atheism. It is denying God's moral government, which is practically denying that there is a God" ¹⁴). But, Keble concluded, if then the world is under moral government, moral questions, that is to say questions of conduct, must be decided by moral, not by mathematical evidence.

It was a 'principle of natural piety' to Keble to take things as they are, because God has made and keeps them so. He therefore preferred practice to theory and experience to reasoning. Just like Butler, he took for his starting-point, not the abstract, but the concrete, the individual and the personal. By studying human behaviour in concrete situations, it ought to be possible for man to discover God's intentions. God had created man for certain purposes and He had created in him the faculties that were required to attain His object. Whereas rationalists had proclaimed that man was a reasoning animal, Keble and the other leaders of the Oxford Movement tried to show that man is 'a seeing, feeling, contemplating, acting animal, influenced by what is direct and precise' ¹⁵). If this is true with respect to life in general, it is also true as regards man in his religious activities, for religion, just as life itself, is mainly concerned with practice. Life is a question of doing, so a life of faith is not a question of theorizing and speculating about religious truths, but of choosing between what pleases oneself and what is agreeable in the eyes of God. The authority of the Bible could not be determined, according to Keble, until it had been spiritually experienced. In ordinary life, he said, nobody would ever postpone his actions till he

¹⁴) KEBLE, *Studia Sacra*, p. 93.

¹⁵) NEWMAN, *Grammar of Assent*, London 1913, p. 94.

was absolutely certain about their results or effects. Why then should anybody do so in religion? In their search for material happiness men followed their common sense. It must therefore be safe to follow this intuitive good sense in religious matters as well. Common sense was actually given to man by God for a guide in everyday life, enabling man to arrive at the moral evidence he needed.

In the eighteenth century Butler had emphasized the fundamental importance of conscience in man's searching for a personal God. He had called this 'principle of reflection' the supreme quality in moral nature. In accordance with the scientific way of looking at things, so typical of his age, he regarded human nature as a mechanically constructed organism in which the 'principle of reflection' governed and controlled the other elements, such as the appetites, the passions and the affections ¹⁶). Newman, too, made conscience the faculty which has been created in man to gain an image of God ¹⁷).

Keble attached the same significance to the 'moral sense', the faculty which he defined as man's common sense regenerated by God's grace given in Baptism. Owing to original sin, he said, man has lost his bearings, so that his common sense will no longer show him the 'safe way' to his eternal happiness. Life is so complicated and there are so many apparently attractive ends, that the chances of going astray and looking for one's happiness in the wrong directions are perilously great. Sin is therefore the great disturbing influence. "If the disturbing forces of sin and wordly passion could be removed, there can be no doubt, that even unbelieving people might be able to advance a good way towards a right determination of questions of faith. In this hypothetical case a man's common sense would be sufficient, for the law of God is the perfection of common sense" ¹⁸).

In other places Keble called this regenerated faculty of man the 'moral instinct' and the 'moral taste'. In one of his sermons he worked out what he meant by 'taste', thus providing us with more particulars about this 'trustworthy guide in all cases affecting religious practice'. He started by saying that 'in order to be successful in any art or knowledge a person should have a taste for it', and he went on to explain that 'taste means that you have a right understanding of the end in

¹⁶) For Butler's doctrine of conscience see also his *Sermons at the Rolls Chapel*, ed. W. E. Gladstone, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1897.

¹⁷) NEWMAN, *Grammar of Assent*, p. 105. cf. Dr. W. H. v. d. POL, *Wegen tot Geloof*, Roermond 1952, ch. iii, pp. 56 ff.

¹⁸) KEBLE, Synod of Exeter, *Occ. Papers & Reviews*, p. 256.

view, and at the same time a real and hearty wish to attain that end, such a desire as implies real and lasting uneasiness in not attaining it' ¹⁹). From this passage we may infer that Keble's 'moral sense' is a human faculty which at once comprises all human capacities, intellectual, emotional and affective, and which concentrates all these capacities on one end, giving unity and consistency to a man's efforts. Much in the same way as Butler's 'principle of reflection' governs and controls all the subordinate constituent parts of human nature, Keble's 'moral sense' focuses them all on one goal, enabling a person to attain the object at which he aims. But whereas the 'principle of reflection' and conscience appear to be perfectly identical with Butler, this is not so evidently the case with Keble's 'moral sense' and conscience. He never used the two terms side by side. In one place he defined conscience as 'that inward sense of right and wrong, which every man feels more or less within him, now accusing, now excusing, now whispering peace and now remorse and self-reproach' ²⁰). The fact that he called both the moral sense and conscience 'the voice of God' hardly justifies the assumption that they must represent the same faculty in man. This comes out all the more clearly, if we remember that God's permanent interference in man's life was experienced by Keble as a reality. On the other hand, a comparison of Keble's definition of 'taste' with what Newman said about conscience in his *Grammar of Assent* will bring out that the two terms only seem to have about the same content. The constituent elements are in fact differently stressed and interpreted by Keble, which gives his moral sense a completely different character.

In Keble's definition three elements may be distinguished, namely knowledge, will and a sense of duty. First, there is in moral taste 'a right understanding of the end in view', which means a knowledge of what will lead towards God or away from Him, therefore a knowledge of right and wrong. Secondly, there is 'a wish to attain that end', which means the will to please God by doing what is right. Thirdly, he says that in the wish an 'uneasiness in not attaining the end' is implied, which is a negative way of expressing that it is felt to be a duty that man should please God by doing what he knows to be right.

In his *Grammar* Newman observed that the feeling of conscience is twofold. 'It is a moral sense, and a sense of duty; a judgment of the reason and a magisterial dictate'. Conscience has 'both a critical and

¹⁹) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. i, pp. 6-10.

²⁰) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. i, s. 13, p. 126.

a judicial office'. It bears testimony to the fact that there is a right and a wrong, and it sanctions that testimony. But conscience, Newman said, also 'vaguely reaches forward to something beyond self, and dimly discerns a sanction higher than self for its decisions, as is evidenced in that keen sense of obligation and responsibility which informs them'. Newman called this aspect of conscience its 'imperative voice'. It always involves the recognition of a living object towards which it is directed. It impresses the imagination with the picture of a Supreme Governor, a Judge. 'It is the creative principle of religion, as the moral sense is the principle of ethics' ²¹).

The moral sense was by no means only the principle of ethics to Keble, in spite of his use of the adjective moral. The different stressing of the constituent elements and especially the different meaning attached to the word knowledge strongly affect the functional quality which Keble ascribed to this human faculty. As to the difference in accentuation, Newman gave much more prominence to the 'higher sanction of right conduct' dimly discerned by man. This was to him the authoritative aspect of conscience, the 'magisterial dictate'. God is recognized to be present in the human conscience as the 'imperative voice'. When Keble distinguished the sense of duty as the element of 'uneasiness in not attaining the end' of pleasing God, he implied that he rather looked at this faculty from the human side. In Newman's description the will-element is weakly indicated by the words 'conscience vaguely reaches forward', whereas with Keble it is most decisive. The will makes a man 'diligent and thoughtful, and therefore, in the long run, successful in the choice of means'. It gives unity to a man's efforts, so that it becomes easier for him to resist the temptation 'to live at random'. The will to please God in everything is the unifying principle in life. Man lives at random, when he does not make God the only object of all his activities. In this connection Keble spoke of the 'partial and secondary occupations of life', suggesting by these terms the relatively small importance of any worldly pursuits. The opposite of 'at random' is 'moral'. Man leads a 'moral' life when the 'sum of all his life and action' is pleasing God. As soon as this chief and only purpose in life is known to man, the will constitutes the most valuable human contribution to the act of faith. "In morals right understanding and right desire depend much more closely upon each other [than in the arts and partial occupations of life]. Wrong choice deadens our sense of the general principle, as surely as

²¹) NEWMAN, *Grammar of Assent*, pp. 105-110.

wrong principle misleads and debases our choice". This was a matter of fact to Keble, and "we may fairly conclude from it", he added, "that the true and consistent desire of excellency is even more essential to moral taste than to taste in any particular occupation or accomplishment" ²²).

The greatest difference between Newman and Keble, however, is caused by their divergent interpretations of the term 'knowledge', in spite of the fact that they agreed, in joint opposition to the spirit of the age, about the way of attaining knowledge.

Keble based his meaning of the term on the Bible, especially on the 'numerous declarations in the Book of Proverbs', which, in his opinion, clearly indicate that it is something very different from intellectual ability. He was strengthened in this opinion by the views of the early Fathers and those of Butler. He thought that the content of the term could best be defined by 'the practical understanding of our true interest'. The foundation of all real knowledge is 'love and fear of the Lord' ²³).

Reason alone could never be an adequate means to arrive at religious truth, if only because of the fact that it was obviously intended by God to be used in cooperation with all the other human faculties. Over-estimation of the reach of one faculty taken separately would necessarily lead to disturbance of the harmony which God wanted to reign in human nature. It was Keble's firm conviction that, due to original sin, human reason has been mutilated in its essence. Of course, the human will, too, has been weakened by sin, so that it has been drawn away from its original object, but the will-element in the moral sense is regenerated in Baptism, and man is again free to direct his will to the general principles which he knows because they have been revealed by God. Owing to God's baptismal grace, man can again submit his will to God's will.

Keble's chief objection to the overestimation of reason may throw some more light on what he took to be the functional quality of the moral sense. He thought reason was greatly to be distrusted because it had proved itself to be intent only on its own operation. It had made man so thoroughly satisfied with himself, that it could not fail to have a benumbing influence on his social feelings. It had destroyed the relation that there was meant to be between man and his surroundings,

²²) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. i, pp. 10-16.

²³) *id.*, pp. 10-16.

both persons and things. It prevented him from having a share in their life. Keble was sure he could discern a definite repulsion between the operations of a man's speculative faculty and those of his moral sense.

We have already seen that Keble laid much stress on the interdependence of 'right understanding and right desire'. The will requires motives to stimulate it and put it into action. He was convinced that the knowledge attained by reason could never put a man's will into motion. He realized that feelings, experiences and affections are real motive powers. They are, however, the results, not of intellectual inferences, but of all sorts of everyday circumstances and incidents of a purely practical nature. He knew that operative truths are not to be achieved by arguments only, but that the moral sense first has to supply such assumptions as may make the premisses acceptable and cause man to assent to the logical conclusion resulting from them. Keble therefore maintained that this sense is purposely given us to correct the errors of our mutilated reason or to supply its imperfections²⁴). It may even cause men to act contrary to their reason. "Cases may be conceived affecting practice, in which the seeming logical or historical evidence may tell almost wholly on one side, yet it may be clearly right to prefer the other by reason of some moral instinct"²⁵). Here Keble was again following in Butler's steps. Butler had laid it down as a rule of conduct essential to a man's well-being, "Never to act upon reason in opposition to practical principles, which the Author of Nature gave us to act upon"²⁶). In Keble's writings there are many examples taken from everyday life to illustrate this rule. The following may be included here: "Suppose a man's parent accused of any great crime: let the amount of apparent proof against him be never so overwhelming, none will deny that it is the child's duty, come what will, to disbelieve his guilt if he can, to give him the benefit not only of reasonable doubt, but of any the faintest and remotest possibility of innocence; and to act accordingly, disregarding all personal consequences"²⁷). What Keble wanted to denote was, of course, that the duty of filial respect and love as a moral obligation cannot easily be superseded by any intellectual proof.

²⁴) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, Preface, pp. xvi, xvii. cf. NEWMAN, *Grammar of Assent*, pp. 75 ff. cf. Dr. P. ZENO, *Newman's leer over het menselijk denken*, Nijmegen 1942.

²⁵) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, Preface, p. xvii. cf. NEWMAN, *Grammar of Assent*, p. 169.

²⁶) BUTLER, *Analogy*, ed. W. E. Gladstone, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1897, Part i, ch. vi, § 11, p. 121.

²⁷) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, Preface, p. xvii.

How does a man arrive at the assumptions which may make the premisses of a logical demonstration acceptable? Keble again found the answer to this question in Butler's *Analogy*. To Butler, revealed religious truth was an indispensable support and comfort for man in his search of truth. He had tried to convince his unbelieving opponents that truth was not only to be found in the Bible. By analogy it was also to be discovered in the whole of Creation. Keble gladly borrowed this principle from his master, the more readily because it was in such striking harmony with what the early Fathers had taught him. As will be worked out in the next chapters, Creation was to Keble an endless collection of symbols having a solemn and sacramental significance, attesting to God's constant presence and continuous activity among men. He wanted to teach his contemporaries that through these symbols man was able to participate in supernatural reality.

Keble's outlook on life is founded on the conviction that instinctive reasoning from analogy is the only form of reasoning that may help men in finding God. The moral sense was to him the faculty which enabled man to see the analogy, which to Keble meant the symbolic function, of all created things. Thus it could guide the individual conscience along the 'safer way' to the discovery that God has not left the world to itself, but has been permanently present in it ever since His Incarnation. Analogy is a kind of reasoning accessible to ignorant as well as to learned people. It clearly shows that constant earnestness, rather than ingenuity and intellectual brilliancy, ensure success both in eternal and in temporal matters. The correspondence between the principles recommended in the Bible and those implied in the ordinary course of things in daily life is to be regarded, according to Keble, as an important element in the general evidence of religion. This correspondence proves that what is true as regards happiness on earth also holds good for eternal happiness. It also shows that religious truths are closely interwoven with practice and experience, that their value can only be ascertained and realized by experiment. As such, they are within the reach of everybody. Keble therefore maintained that "whatever difficulty a man may find in comprehending the evidence of religion, the experiment of holy living, the true 'experimentum crucis' is always in his power. So long as he has that, he must not complain that he wants sufficient means of convincing himself" ²⁸).

²⁸) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. viii, p. 214. cf. KEBLE, Review of the Rev. J. Miller's Bampton Lectures, *Occ. Papers & Reviews*, p. 172.

Although practice and experience are called far superior to reason alone, this does not mean that Keble wanted his contemporaries to trust to ignorance in religious matters. He often declared that a Christian depends for his eternal happiness on whether 'he knows from what he is preserved and to what he is entitled'. He thought it absolutely necessary that men should be taught Christian knowledge ²⁹). It was by no means his intention to suggest that faith is the enemy of thought and intellectual investigation. "A man's own salvation is his own concern, and his reason was given him, and must be used to secure it: without which, any respect or admiration he might feel for his divine Instructor would prove but a transitory emotion, not to be depended on in the hour of trial" ³⁰). It cannot be maintained that Keble was an anti-intellectualist. He called reason an insufficient foundation of faith because to him faith was the expression of the whole personality, in which the will, not reason, is the decisive and supreme faculty.

After all that has been said so far, the content of Keble's 'moral sense' may be described in the following terms. It is a faculty anterior to conscience, for it is the guide of conscience in finding God. Being an instinct regenerated by God's grace, it is able to recognize the presence and power of God in the world. It does so by means of analogy. It enables man to discern that the supernatural is represented in and by the natural. It approaches everything material as a symbol of something invisible and supernatural. It is a moral guide in that it distinguishes 'safety' from 'unsafety', which means that it tells us what pleases God and what displeases Him. Moreover, it is the faculty which employs both our analogical knowledge and the sense of duty to please God — which sense is due to our love and fear of Him — as motive powers of the will. It comprises all man's faculties and represents his whole personality. It is bestowed on man to respond to his innate longing for order, harmony and unity ³¹).

However distinctly the moral sense may indicate in what direction our duty lies, it does not lead to mathematical certainty. In many sermons Keble vigorously opposed the claim of certainty, which he thought one of the worst effects of the rationalistic spirit of the age and the greatest temptation to man. Man should not forget that he is 'a fallen being in an imperfect world'. Religious uncertainty was to Keble

²⁹) KEBLE, *Occ. Papers & Reviews*, pp. 163-166.

³⁰) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. iii, p. 52.

³¹) For the part played by the imagination see Ch. IV of this essay.

also a natural consequence of the decayed and divided state of the Church Universal. In their anxiety to have the comfort of certainty, men were disinclined to believe that anything could be an object of faith except what was 'very distinct in character, clear in its credentials, well authenticated in its details' ³²). It was Keble's experience, however, that a thinking person had better become suspicious when arguments and statements sounded entirely satisfactory, when experiments made the impression of fitting together perfectly, when systems 'left no spot unguarded'.

Following Butler's theory very consistently, Keble called 'probability' the nearest approach to certainty for fallen man ³³). To him "Probability, as opposed to intuition or demonstration, is the very guide of life and duty" ³⁴). This doctrine of probability rests on 'moral demonstration', which is the result of bringing together 'the conjugation of probabilities' from the several sources of historical and personal experience ³⁵). Each separate probability may be evaded as insufficiently reliable, but their combined effect will 'possess all the understanding and fill all the corners of consideration' ³⁶). So probability is the result of a juxtaposition of similar experiences. The more experiences are collected, the stronger the probability of a truth becomes. Not only the repetition of the same probability will lead to 'moral certainty', but probable proofs of different kinds combined with those discovered by other persons may converge into building up a person's 'real or moral certainty'. This certainty, the result of experiencing the practical tendencies of all truth, can never be abandoned for any purely intellectual argument. Experience constantly grows in the course of a well-spent life, so that not the intellectual but the good Christian is to be considered the safe guide in life ³⁷).

Keble depicted a life of faith as the gradual advance from one probability to another, eventually achieving 'moral certainty'. In his opinion, religious knowledge will always remain to some extent a mixture of moral certainty and doubt. He called doubtfulness a natural condition of man's earthly existence which he has incurred by his sins. In this

³²) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, Postscript to s. viii, p. 357.

³³) For Keble's probability and Newman's certainty see Ch. I, pp. 19, 20.

³⁴) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, Preface, p. xii.

³⁵) KEBLE, Review of The Unpublished Papers of Bishop Warburton, *Occ. Papers & Reviews*, p. 128.

³⁶) *id.*, p. 128.

³⁷) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. ii, pp. 36-38.

respect, religious knowledge differs both from scientific knowledge, which excludes all doubt, and from ignorance, which excludes all certainty. Doubt admits of various degrees, because certainty and doubt may be blended in various proportions. Religious knowledge does not impart insight. It does not show why a thing exists, but only that it exists. Christians will have to be satisfied with this, 'since it is the condition of our being in the world to walk by faith and probable conjecture, not by sight or perfect demonstration' ³⁸). In the Bible faith is spoken of as 'the mainspring of our ordinary life'. By rejecting analogy and probability as forms of religious knowledge, man narrows the reach and extent of faith as a principle of action ³⁹).

The highest degree of moral certainty is attained here on earth, when the sum total of all the personal experiences and practices of many generations results in a general agreement. This is the reason why Keble attached so much value to the Tradition of the first few centuries of the Church. He was convinced that the selection of fundamental doctrines made by the Ancient Church, and the development of the mystical interpretation of nature shown in the writings of the early Fathers, was attended with such unmistakable evidence of providential guidance as reasonable persons would consider sufficient in all practical matters. Keble therefore called Tradition a 'moral demonstration' and a standard for all later generations. Consequently, he thought it the privilege as well as the duty of all Christians to approach life in the manner that was most in accordance with primitive Antiquity.

One example may be given here to illustrate how Keble applied the doctrine of probability to a problem much in dispute during the years of the Oxford Movement, namely whether the Church of England was a divine or a human institution. The example is taken from *Tract 4*. This is his line of argument: If there is a fair probability that an institution proceeds from God, all believing persons will at once prefer it. They will not demand that every point is proved by inevitable demonstration. The indications of God's pleasure will be enough for them. They will say to themselves, "Jesus Christ's own commission is the best external security I can have, that in receiving this bread and wine I verily receive His Body and Blood. Either the Bishops have that commission or there is no such thing in the world. For at least Bishops have it with as much evidence as Presbyters without it. In proportion then

³⁸) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. iii, pp. 56-57.

³⁹) id., Preface, p. x.

to my Christian anxiety for keeping as near my Saviour as I can, I shall, of course, be very unwilling to separate myself from Episcopal communion". And in another place in the same Tract he wrote, "It is better and more scriptural to have than to want Christ's special commission for conveying His Word to the people and consecrating and distributing the pledge of His Holy Sacrifice, if such commission be anyhow attainable — better and more scriptural, if we cannot remove all doubt, at least to prefer that communion which can make out the best probable title, provided always that nothing heretical or otherwise immoral be inserted in the terms of communion" ⁴⁰).

It will have become clear that there is a close relation between the moral sense and faith. One of Keble's favourite sayings was, that following one's moral sense is having 'implicit faith'. He defined this kind of faith as 'taking, practically, the side of virtue and self-denial, wherever the evidence seems doubtful'. It is 'no more than abiding by the dictates of experience, not in defiance, but in default of theoretical and argumentative knowledge' ⁴¹). In Keble's opinion, the moral sense was the point of application for divine grace, and following one's moral sense was the only way for a Christian to have a share in the act of faith. In a period when people were gradually losing their faith because they concentrated their minds more and more on the material aspect of nature only, Keble did his utmost to show how perfectly in accordance with human nature it is to practise 'implicit faith'. He pointed out that children are brought up everywhere in the exercise of this faculty. Their reliance on parents, nurses and teachers is a proof, he thought, that God wants to prepare men in this way for the most decisive exercise of it, namely in accepting the teachings of God and 'in renouncing their own partialities and private judgments' ⁴²).

The aspect of 'implicit faith' which Keble stressed most, probably because it was farthest removed from the mentality of his age, is that it implies 'making a venture on things unseen' ⁴³). It stimulates man to look 'to the eternal things out of sight . . . and neglect in a manner the things which are in sight, although they are ever so pressing on the body and outward senses' ⁴⁴). Admittedly, 'implicit faith' does not fully satisfy the intellect. It is a 'simple and unreserved submission to the commands

⁴⁰) KEBLE, *Tract 4*, esp. pp. 3-5.

⁴¹) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. ii, pp. 32-35.

⁴²) cf. e.g. *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. viii, s. 38, pp. 1-5.

⁴³) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, Preface, p. lxvii.

⁴⁴) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. i, s. 10, p. 99.

of an infallible guide'. Its greatest advantage is that it puts an end to all restless longings for a more certain and systematic knowledge which man after all will never be able to attain. It means 'rest to the perplexed spirit . . . and the end of being tossed up and down upon the waves of conflicting opinions' ⁴⁵).

Another characteristic of 'implicit faith' is that it is not a single act, nor an impulse or a matter of feeling, but a regular habit of mind, a progressive habit, going on from a lower form of faith to a higher. As such, Keble explained, it must be practised in continual acts of devotion to God and constant resignation to His will. "It may grow and thrive from day to day, and spread itself quietly like a holy leaven through all our thoughts, works and actions" ⁴⁶).

A third characteristic mentioned by Keble is its element of trust and confidence. 'Implicit faith' is a token of practical confidence in all that is fully revealed to us in Holy Scripture, so that we are anxious to make a trial of it in everyday life ⁴⁷).

The point to be discussed next will have to be Keble's view of the change from 'implicit faith' to real faith, a change which can only be effected by God in Baptism.

Sacramental grace took up such a central position in Keble's religious convictions that he could not but disapprove of the doctrine of 'Justification by faith only'. He called it a 'perfidious snare', and warned all who thought they could rely entirely on their faith, not to deceive themselves ⁴⁸). The grace given by God in Baptism puts a person in a position to focus his regenerated 'common sense' on his eternal happiness. The fact that a human quality then becomes the guiding principle in man's religious practice was to Keble another proof that faith was originally implanted in human nature. He wanted to convince his contemporaries that it is quite natural and consistent for a man to be religious. Sin has distracted this human instinct from its natural object, but baptismal grace has restored the relation. By means of the regenerating power of Baptism, man's natural religious disposition is re-established and his eyes are opened to see the practical value of the truths which Christ has revealed to him. This grace is the free and unmerited gift of God to

⁴⁵) KEBLE, Review of the Rev. J. Miller's Bampton Lectures, *Occ. Papers & Reviews*, p. 172.

⁴⁶) KEBLE, *Studia Sacra*, p. 60. cf. *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. v, s. 13, p. 149; id., vol. vi, s. 20, p. 204; id., vol. xi, s. 37, p. 430.

⁴⁷) cf. *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. i, s. 18, p. 195.

⁴⁸) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, Preface, p. xxix.

man. It is entirely the work of God and the only means to take a man beyond the limits of the created world and show him the realities of the mysterious world of God.

Keble strongly objected to what he called the most typical tenet of Calvinism, that 'faith is a special token from God's sanctifying Spirit vouchsafed to man upon his personal act of believing in Christ as his Saviour'. Criticizing the Calvinistic view of the act of faith, he said, "It is not 'our' righteousness but the 'righteousness of God', because He graciously accepts it as righteousness for the sake of our Mediator, imperfect and blemished as it always must be in us. The Holy Spirit forms the habit of faith in our minds, and helps us to cherish it by the right use of the Sacraments and other aids which His Providence affords. Without Christ's teaching, the wisest of men could never have dreamed either of the reward to which faith aspires, or of the process of Christian devotion by which God prepares people for it, much less of the mysterious Sacrifice which is the only meritorious cause of either" ⁴⁹).

Although Keble rejected the Calvinistic point of view, he may sometimes make the impression as if he rather undervalued the effect of baptismal grace. At first sight, phrases like 'imperfect and blemished as it [our righteousness] always must be in us' are hardly compatible with the Catholic doctrine. Still, it is my opinion that Keble's theological standpoint as regards the ontological change brought about in Baptism fully deserves to be called Catholic, even if his choice of words should not always be very happy. It is easy to find such dubitative passages as the following, "God gives us leave to beseech Him to look upon us, not as we are in ourselves, *all sin and pollution*, but as He caused us to be in Him, at Baptism, *with the robe of righteousness thrown over us*" ⁵⁰). Indeed, there may have been at first some wavering in Keble's attitude towards the condition of man after Baptism, a doubtfulness which involuntarily found expression in a non-Catholic terminology. On the other hand, already in his early sermons we find such sentences as "We humbly trust that deep and true repentance [of sins after Baptism] may hinder us from quite losing God's blessing of *inward* and *heavenly* purity given us in Baptism" ⁵¹). It is perhaps best to put it in this way, that there is a development towards clearness and definiteness in Keble's attitude to this mystery. At first, when defending what he considered

⁴⁹) KEBLE, *Studia Sacra*, pp. 61-62.

⁵⁰) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. i, s. 44, p. 457.

⁵¹) *id.*, vol. i, s. 42, p. 428.

to be the Anglican point of view against the errors of Calvinists and rationalists, he sometimes expressed himself less accurately, but later on, when the Anglican position was endangered more and more seriously by the liberal views of people like Gorham ⁵²), and such views became all the more destructive, because they were officially sanctioned by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council and the Court of Appeal, Keble expressed his thoughts more positively and more clearly in accordance with the sacramental truths as they were taught by the Ancient Church.

A clear proof of Keble's standpoint is furnished by the fact that belief in man's regenerate state after Baptism was for him the very criterion for classifying people into believers and unbelievers. If people believe that they are 'truly and actually in a supernatural state after Baptism, changed in their condition and separated from ordinary men', he calls them believers. All others are unbelievers. The latter may accept that there was supernatural interference in the world at one time, but they are sure that that period is now fully passed. Truth and goodness, as they are found in this world, may be to them effects of God's providence, an improved and still improving way of living, but the control of it, they think, is left entirely in the hands of men. They do not regard such effects at all as the results of a continuous interference of God. In Keble's eyes, this contrast between Belief and Unbelief forms not only the dividing-line separating whole denominations, it also causes the existence of divisions within each denomination. He even thought it possible that, under varying circumstances and in different moods, one and the same person is now a believer, now an unbeliever. It all depends on the practical acceptance or the denial of the reality of the supernatural element in life. It was not surprising to Keble that the two categories are not able to understand each other. It is but natural, he thought, that the want of faith in unbelievers prevents them from comprehending the sayings and doings of believers. They simply cannot perceive the force of the arguments adduced by believers. On this account, he thought it wrong to suspect such men of wilful opposition. He

⁵²) G. C. Gorham, an Anglican clergyman, denied the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. When on this ground the Bishop of Exeter refused to institute him to the vicarage of Bramford Speke, the Privy Council overruled this refusal. The civil power thus asserted its supremacy over the spiritual. This is known as the Gorham case (March, 1850). cf. Keble's reactions in *A call to speak out*, reprinted in *Occ. Papers & Reviews*, pp. 219 ff. cf. NEWMAN, *The King William Street Lectures*, (1850).

supposed the only way of enlightening unbelievers was 'adducing the best analogies you could from the provinces of other senses which are more within their reach' ⁵³).

God's grace was to Keble the essential and determinative factor in life. Again and again he emphasized that in everything he does, man is entirely dependent on it. When a man is justified by God's baptismal grace, the Holy Spirit comes to live in his heart to sanctify it. Keble particularly wanted to emphasize the mysterious fact that it is the Holy Ghost who changes the human heart, gives man as it were a new nature and makes him holy by uniting him to the Incarnate Son of God ⁵⁴). This is his interpretation of the term 'sanctification' ⁵⁵). Owing to this communion, a man's mind and temper is regenerated, his inclinations are controlled by this unifying principle, namely the desire to please God in Christ by using all the means, natural and supernatural, that God has put at the disposal of Christians ⁵⁶). This is exactly what Keble wanted to indicate when speaking of the change from 'common sense' into 'moral sense'. The central position of the will is brought out very clearly. From this unifying principle, which is the very real effect of the Holy Ghost dwelling in the heart of each individual Christian, Keble expected the ultimate unity of all Christians as members of the Church Universal.

Complete dependence on God's grace does not mean, however, that a Christian is merely passive in the act of faith. His will is free, and his share in the act of faith is the submission of his will to God's will. This makes it into the most decisive act in life. In his own life, Keble proved how very strictly he interpreted and put this submission into practice. Man is free to contribute his share or to withhold it. In one of his sermons he expressed this by saying, "We could not have saved ourselves, but being saved, we may ruin ourselves" ⁵⁷). He regularly admonished his parishioners always to regard their life as a period of preparation and probation, in which it was their duty to turn all good things of the world to God's glory. "We are not safe", he told them, "but we are on our road to safety. Christ has put us in the road, but He does not force us to move forward. We never could have saved

⁵³) KEBLE, Synod of Exeter, *Occ. Papers & Reviews*, pp. 251 ff. Keble applied this idea in his theory of poetry. cf. Chapt. IV of this essay.

⁵⁴) cf. *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. vii, s. 27, p. 259.

⁵⁵) cf. Ch. VI, p. 150 of this essay.

⁵⁶) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. ix, s. 14, p. 140.

⁵⁷) *id.*, vol. vii, s. 11, p. 101.

ourselves, but He leaves us free to destroy ourselves, if we will, to cast away the salvation which He so dearly purchased for us" ⁵⁸).

Keble's attitude towards 'good works' is not at all dubious. He was convinced that faith can never be separated from its moral nature, by which he meant that faith cannot be considered apart from its practical consequences. In his opinion, the reverse is equally true; morality can never be separated from faith. These remarks of his should be interpreted against the background of Keble's time, when the meaning attached to the word 'moral' was changing rapidly. He often gave utterance to his objections to the so-called morality which so many of his contemporaries strove after in their self-sufficiency. He accused them of being content with 'high civilisation, polish of mind and manners, order, exactness, convenience of social intercourse, the luxuries of a refined life, corporeal and mental'. He tried to make them see that their morality encouraged a 'shadow of religion', namely respectability, by which they were discouraged to pay sufficient attention to the eternal value of their conduct on earth ⁵⁹). He warned them that they neglected their spiritual life, both in its personal and in its social aspects. In order to make them give up their self-conceit, he showed them the full extent of their weakness and helplessness, their complete dependence on God, and reminded them that a Christian is only able to do good works when he is united to Christ in His Mysterious Body. He taught them that by doing good works they cooperated with God, and that therefore the welfare of the visible as well as of the invisible world depended on their doing their part with God's help and under His Providence ⁶⁰). They ought to consider it a privilege that together with all baptized men they are fellow-workers of God, helping Him to accomplish what He had come to achieve on earth. "The only thing for which we have come into this world is to do our part towards saving our own and other people's souls. All inquiries, pursuits, fancies, employments which are not made to help in this work are merely vain or worse than vain" ⁶¹). But even if man is allowed to take an active part in the work of God, he should always remember his dependence. "If it is said that we shall be judged according to our works, we must understand that in the end we shall be rewarded, not so much for our works as for God's own works in us" ⁶²).

⁵⁸) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. xi, s. 35, p. 408.

⁵⁹) KEBLE, *Studia Sacra*, pp. 69-78.

⁶⁰) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. iii, s. 9, p. 88.

⁶¹) *id.*, vol. iv, s. 37, p. 370.

⁶²) *id.*, vol. i, s. 12, p. 122; cf. vol. i, s. 15, *passim*.

In his interpretation of the words of St. James, 'By works a man is justified, not by faith only', Keble found occasion to impress upon his contemporaries the necessity of proving their belief in practice. He maintained that belief by itself is not enough, but that faith means 'submitting oneself to the will of Christ actually in what one thinks, speaks and does', in other words that 'faith' and 'works' are equally necessary for salvation ⁶³). Christians should understand that God's grace could bear hardly any fruit, if everybody did not do his part. Keble was afraid that too many Anglican Churchmen thought that it was possible to live close to God and at the same time give themselves up to the ordinary pursuits and pleasures of the world. Therefore he reminded them that following one's 'moral sense' might mean 'choosing the fellowship of Christ's suffering'. "We shall have to be made conformable to His death, if by any means we may attain to the resurrection of the dead" ⁶⁴).

After these quotations, this is perhaps a suitable place to insert a few words about Keble's strictness. In the first chapter, when we tried to give a description of the man John Keble, we have already mentioned that he took the term 'pleasure' in a very wide sense. He considered all the pursuits of the world as absolutely incompatible with a 'life close to God'. When reading his sermons, one is struck by his austerity, so that one sometimes cannot help thinking that he was inclined to go too far in his demands. Indeed, he may easily make the impression of being almost anti-humanistic. We have, on the other hand, so little intimate information about his personal practice, that it would be rather rash to conclude from what little there is that he was an ascetic in the stricter sense of the term. It is a fact that he aimed at denying himself any form of indulgence, and that he made the very highest demands upon himself. Belief in the perfectibility of man, which was at the centre of the doctrine of progress and predominated in the spirit of the age, may have driven him to go to the other extreme. In his eyes, this kind of perfectibility was to be rejected because it was contrary to the Bible, which had revealed to man his real position in the world and his relation to God.

We shall now conclude this chapter with some remarks on Keble's views of 'personal judgment'.

He pointed out to Anglican Churchmen that, for the knowledge of their duties and for their instruction and guidance, God has given them

⁶³) KEBLE, *Studia Sacra*, p. 104.

⁶⁴) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. vi, s. 28, p. 291.

their Church, the Bible, the Tradition of the Ancient Church and the Book of Common Prayer. Their religious attitude would therefore be right, he said, if they submitted to the fundamental facts as they are explained on the authority of their Church and have been practised ever since the time of the Ancient Church. So he could assure them that in respect of all the chief and fundamental dogmatical truths of Christianity they were strictly guided. In all other matters of faith, however, it was their duty — and Keble called it a task rather than a privilege — to judge personally. This was the meaning to be attached to 'walking by faith and probable conjecture, not by sight or perfect demonstration'. In this, he said, lies the opportunity offered to every Christian to use his period of probation well, and to grow gradually in the real knowledge of the truth which concerns his eternal happiness ⁶⁵). During this time of probation, it is moral qualities like attentiveness, obedience, perseverance and self-control which are obviously of far greater importance than depth and originality of intellect.

In the words 'Prove all things. Hold fast that which is good' (i Thess. v. 19, 20), the Bible provides us with the test for finding the truth. From these words Keble inferred that what is good has to be found out in practice and by experience. According to him, this test renders every man who endeavours to apply it honestly, a competent judge, not of course of what is true in speculative thinking, but of what is right in morality ⁶⁶).

So when Keble used the term 'personal judgment', he meant by it that it is the task and duty of every Christian to find out for himself how the various sacred truths of Christianity may best be put into practice in his personal life. He did not mean to say that the private judgment of an individual Christian or of a Christian province of the Church Universal could ever be set up against the official judgment of the Church.

The general method for attaining the truth recommended by Keble is to accept the substance of the Creed, to test it by Scripture and, after it has been scripturally verified, to acquiesce in the judgment of the Ancient Church as to its sufficiency ⁶⁷). Besides, there is a personal way of testing the practical value of a truth, namely, "If a doctrinal view

⁶⁵) cf. KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. iii, pp. 56, 57.

⁶⁶) When we defined the meaning of Keble's 'moral sense' (cf. pp. 55 ff.), we showed that to Keble 'morality' had a wider sense than moral science or ethics.

⁶⁷) cf. KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, Postscript to s. viii, pp. 375-377.

or an interpretation of Scripture, on the best consideration you can give it, really tends to deepen faith in those great foundation articles, and otherwise to promote holiness and humility, to disengage you from the world, to make sin more exceedingly sinful, then act as if it were true and you are safe. If it contradict that which was from the beginning, if it lower the standard of morality, or encourage men to take liberties, if it engender spiritual pride and a conceit of God's special favour, be sure it is not of God" ⁶⁸).

In order to profit by a truth it is not sufficient for a Christian merely to accept it on the authority of his teachers ('to assent notionally' to it, as Newman called it), but he must see to it that the truth takes root in his personal understanding so as to become a motive power for his will (Newman termed this 'to assent really'). Keble thought it quite natural that many simple people would not easily allow such great authority to their personal opinions in controversies of religious belief, but he was convinced that they were entitled to it, and that the strongest scruples would in the end give way to the persuasive power of personal experience ⁶⁹).

Real knowledge would thus prove to be the result of the combination of an earnest desire to be led by Holy Scripture, acquiescence in Tradition and following one's personal moral sense.

Keble thought it necessary to state explicitly that real knowledge is never directly and perceptibly infused or communicated by God. He could not accept that there is any partiality in God's distribution of spiritual knowledge. He was as seriously opposed to the infallibility of the Church of Rome as he was to Evangelical emotionalism or to the Calvinistic feeling of election. In one of his academic sermons he said, "God's Spirit works on our spirits, not miraculously, but by quiet methods, guiding not superseding reason, and in such a way as we must never expect to distinguish from the natural movements of our own thoughts" ⁷⁰). Even though it is regenerated by God's grace in Baptism, the moral sense is and remains after all a human faculty which is active along human lines. The Holy Spirit works with all persons in the same measure as they are willing to work for themselves.

⁶⁸) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. iii, pp. 62, 63.

⁶⁹) id., s. iii, pp. 63-66.

⁷⁰) id., s. ii, p. 41.

CHAPTER IV

KEBLE'S THEORY OF POETRY

THE ANALOGY BETWEEN POETRY AND RELIGION

Although in the first decades of the nineteenth century rationalism gradually pervaded most fields of human activity, there were at the same time unmistakable symptoms of a changing outlook on life, opposed to any overestimation of reason. While the unshaken belief in the perfectibility of man developed into nineteenth century liberalism, the repulsive aspects of the French Revolution contributed much to an alteration in the trend of public opinion. Many English people showed themselves much more accessible to the ideas of German philosophers which were introduced into England by S. T. Coleridge and first put into practice by the poets of the Romantic School. In some quarters the superiority of pure reason was waning, and the importance to be attached to the feelings and emotions was gradually more readily recognized.

It was Keble's conviction that the originally intended harmony between the natural and the supernatural had been disturbed by the application of the scientific way of thinking to the practical sides of life. We have already seen that in the religious field he looked for a remedy in the reawakening of man's moral sense. He hoped that thus man could again be made aware of the reality of God's presence in the world. He welcomed the rise of the new kind of poetry as a hopeful sign of a changing mentality, perhaps even the first weak promise of a coming religious revival. At any rate, he gladly secured its support in his struggle against liberalism.

What resemblance did Keble see between the poetic and the religious expression of man?

His studies of the Old Testament, of Hebrew poetry and of the Classics had, he thought, supplied him with sufficient evidence in support of his contention that there had seldom been a revival of religion without some 'noble order of poets' first leading the way. In his last lecture as Professor of Poetry he gave it as his opinion that "we shall not readily find an instance of any state, provided indeed it enjoy the advantage of

stable law and morality, which has changed its existing religious belief for a more serious and holier creed, unless the tone of its favourite poets has first undergone a change. And, assuredly, whenever religion has been weakened, there men fall back into the condition in which our ancestors were before embracing Christianity. There is no reason, then, why they should not be raised gradually to a better life by the same means and method, namely by a new order of Poetry”¹).

In the history of Jewish literature a long series of prophets and poets ‘moulded men’s minds to be ready to receive the fuller revelation of wisdom and goodness that was to come’. Among the Greeks and the Romans the poets played exactly the same part as the prophets had played among the Jews. They prepared men ‘to welcome the pungent flavour of the heavenly doctrine’. Keble thought this fact was still the chief reason for recommending and insisting on the study of the classical authors. In English literature, too, Keble supposed there were indications of the same principle being at work, especially in the poetry of the Elizabethan age. Tentatively, he couched his impression in the form of the following question, “Was not the tone and temper of poets and poetry such as, even though the writers were unconscious of it, exactly accorded with the healthier religious spirit which was destined to prevail in the reign of Charles?” He praised Spenser and Shakespeare, because they ‘lifted men’s minds to piety and religion: for each of them always tests what can be seen by reference to a standard of heavenly truth, whether he is treating of deeds and affairs of men or of the splendid charms of earth and sky’. The fact that in the early Church there was hardly any kind of poetry to be found was to him another, though a negative proof of the same idea. The absence of poetry in that period was, he thought, to be accounted for by the consideration that the early Christians ‘had none of that strong sense of need, none of that restless longing for a nobler life, for which poetry is needed as a solace. The very foundation of their faith assured them that they were sharers of a life of bliss and holiness’²).

Owing to the disturbance of the harmony between the natural and the supernatural, poetry, too, had undergone the same fate as most other forms of activity in which the human soul seeks for expression. Poetry could not possibly serve its purpose because the whole of creation no longer centred in God as its origin and ultimate object. In Keble’s eyes,

¹) KEBLE, *Lectures on Poetry*, vol. ii, lect. xl, p. 477.

²) id., vol. ii, lect. xxx, pp. 269 ff.

nothing could be further removed from genuine poetry than the prevailing disposition to reduce everything to the test of gain and utility, a disposition which he imputed to the spirit of democracy. Limiting their view only to those aspects of Nature which were perceptible by the senses, poets could not but lack sound judgment as regards human life and the real charms of Nature. They came to scorn all that was familiar and simple, because they no longer saw the relation of all material things to the supernatural. Consequently, they strove after 'far-fetched abstractions', 'high-wrought subtlety of thought' and 'pointed cleverness of phrase'. They published their poems 'with a view to popular acclaim'. To Keble, such writers were at most 'secondary poets or imitators', though they might be superior in talents of composition and diction. They certainly did not deserve the title of 'primary poets', because they had robbed poetry of its highest function and had made it a 'mere branch of literature'.

In a similar way, Keble thought, it was mainly due to the spirit of democracy that poets set so much value on the cultivation of the form of their poems. Of course, he admitted that poets should always try to find the most beautiful and adequate forms for their thoughts and feelings, but they should never make form their first aim. The form of a poem was only of secondary importance. "The heavenly flame is not by their means [metre, rhythm, rhyme] enkindled, but merely transmitted" ³). To those who maintained that 'beauty of language is one of the very sources and fountain-heads of Poetry and must colour the whole stream' he pointed out that 'they fall into precisely the same mistake as one who should maintain that we apprehend those objects which touch our external senses with the body, not with the mind' ⁴).

Literary criticism, he feared, had suffered as much as poetry by such 'foolish attempts', as had been made under the influence of the spirit of the age, 'to trace a hard unvarying outline round forms which would not be lovely, if they did not waver with every breath of heaven' ⁵). Literary critics should 'draw their axioms from the feelings, not from the reason' ⁶), because what they had to deal with was 'on record in every man's heart'. These axioms were 'not to be proved, but to be

³) KEBLE, *Lectures on Poetry*, vol. ii, lect. xxviii, p. 217.

⁴) id., p. 218.

⁵) KEBLE, Review of Copleston's *Praelectiones*, *Occ. Papers & Reviews*, p. 148.

⁶) id., p. 149.

stated and accounted for' ^{6a}). The task of critics was 'not the improvement of the poetical art, but of the science of human nature' ⁷). They had to develop 'the general laws of the human mind', and 'to teach us a valuable lesson on the connection of the intellectual and moral faculties' ⁸). Keble called it 'an unfounded notion' that poetical criticism should be 'nothing else but an attempt to fix things by a certain standard'. To him, poetry was concerned with things 'whose beauty consists in variableness as well as variety'. He did not see why critics should endeavour 'to teach a man a lesson which he would never consent to learn of another, namely when he ought to be pleased'. But, he added, "we are glad and proud to write it, our national poetry, which never wore the shackles of French taste with a good grace, has in the course of the last fifty years been gradually disencumbering herself of them . . . and criticism has shared in the benefit of emancipation" ⁹).

In judging the mental orientation from which the poetry of the preceding period had sprung, Keble strongly emphasized the contrast between the 'town' and the 'country'. The 'town' stood for rationalism and democracy, the mental attitude which is opposed to that party in the state 'which holds it a sacrilege . . . to try to upset in mere pursuit of novelty, practices sanctioned by ancient usage and by religion', opposed to 'those venerable institutions whereby our forefathers . . . seem even yet . . . to influence our life: custom, law and religion' ¹⁰). He described the townsman as the arrogant, irreligious democrat who measures all things by the standard of his own enjoyment, he is the man of the utilitarian standard who has lost all sense of tradition, who is 'never carried away by any lofty enthusiasm', who wants to 'have everything open and public', and who is best characterized by his 'lack of true reserve and self-restraint' ¹¹). It was the lack of reserve that Keble censured most in this mentality. He considered it one of the worst defects of character, hindering a man in finding the right attitude to life. The cause of this defect Keble found in the circumstance that a townsman was accustomed always to give full vent to his emotions, so that the beneficial experience of tension was entirely unknown to him, the feeling

^{6a}) cf. Keble's attitude towards the attainment of knowledge about religious truths.

⁷) KEBLE, Review of Copleston's *Praelectiones*, *Occ. Papers & Reviews*, p. 149.

⁸) *id.*, p. 162.

⁹) *id.*, p. 148.

¹⁰) KEBLE, *Lectures on Poetry*, vol. i, lect. xiii, pp. 256-260.

¹¹) *id.*, pp. 256-260.

of tension which was necessary for a man to feel the need of poetic or religious expression as a relief. As such people were 'more habituated to daily avocations in the full light of publicity', they wasted no time 'in search for expedients and indirect methods' ¹²), which constituted one of the main sources of poetry. Because they never felt 'overwhelmed', they were in constant danger of losing their sense of awe, mystery and dependence on a higher power.

The 'country', on the other hand, represented unspoilt Nature to Keble. Countrymen lived close to Nature and they were satisfied with the things that were familiar and common to all men, such as the beauty of heaven and earth, the changes of the seasons and the frailty of human life. Reserve was one of their most characteristic qualities. Keble held them up as an example, advising his contemporaries 'to keep intact that modesty of the peasantry and their scrupulous apprehension of undue publicity. For if any one with his own free will loses these instincts . . . he has not only turned his back on the fairest of all studies [poetry], but also put away from himself for once and all, a most important aid to virtue and true piety' ¹³).

Keble's ideas about poetry, its function and place in the whole of God's ordinance, were first sketched in outline in his review of Copleston's *Praelectiones Academicæ* in the *British Critic* of 1814, and in his article on *Sacred Poetry* written for the *Quarterly Review* of 1825. Their fullest statement, however, is to be found in his *Lectures on Poetry*, which he delivered in the University of Oxford as Professor of Poetry during the years 1832-1841 ¹⁴), and in his review of Lockhart's *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.*, published in the *British Critic* of 1838. The same ideas also form part of the foundation of his *Tract 89 on The Mysticism attributed to the Early Fathers of the Church*, printed in 1841.

An appreciation of these ideas is only possible if they are considered as forming part of Keble's general outlook on life and on man's position in the world. It is a fundamental principle in his philosophy of life that the natural and the supernatural aspects of the universe are closely related, the supernatural world being represented symbolically in the natural. Originally, God has created man as belonging at once to both worlds.

¹²) KEBLE, *Lectures on Poetry*, vol. i, lect. ii, p. 36.

¹³) id., vol. i, lect. ii, p. 37.

¹⁴) Keble delivered his lectures in Latin, as was the custom then. The title was *De Poeticæ Vi Medicæ, Praelectiones Academicæ*, Parker, Oxford 1844. They were translated by EDWARD KERSHAW FRANCIS, 2 vols., Oxf. Clar. Press, 1912.

This situation was disturbed by man's sin, but through Christ's Incarnation and Sacrifice it was restored again. Since then, however, the material world has become much more alluring for its own sake, and it is apt to blind man's eyes to its symbolic meaning. Now man experiences his belonging to both worlds as a tension. But God has not left man to his fate. He has revealed Himself and His original plans for man's eternal happiness, and besides, He has given man His grace, through which the human faculty which was intended from the beginning to direct man to God, but which has, as it were, been atrophied owing to sin, is restored. This faculty is man's moral sense, of which the symbolic sense forms one of the constituent elements. The moral sense can show man the safe way to God, because the symbolic sense enables him to penetrate into the symbolic representations of the supernatural world. Poetry is one of the means divinely bestowed on man to understand God's manifestations in Nature. In Keble's opinion, poetry is 'a divine gift' intended to prepare the way for revealed truth itself. He was convinced that there existed a kind of relationship between "those subjects which God has ordained to prepare the way for His Gospel and the disposition and tone of mind of those whom we honour pre-eminently as poets . . . Quite natural, for in each case there is the same characteristic: the mind is carried in its desires beyond the things of this world, its hope lays hold on something far better, and it puts aside the thought of visible and material blessings" ¹⁵⁾).

The term 'poetic' was to Keble synonymous with "lifting men out of the 'ignorant present' and causing them to shape even trivial actions by reference to an archetype beyond the reach of man" ¹⁶⁾). The difference between poetry and morality or theology was that the latter teach by direct instruction, the former by moral and religious associations. 'Poetic' was to him the direct opposite of 'rationalistic', so that poetry, as interpreted by him, might help to restore the harmonious order in Creation which had been disturbed by rationalism. Quite consistently, he did not in the least object to extending the term 'poetic' to architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and even to numberless objects and situations in daily life. If something 'transports the mind beyond this ignorant present', if it fills the mind with the consciousness of immortality or if it teaches man the difference between morally right and wrong, it was to him poetic. All poetry had, in his eyes, the lofty function of counterbalancing the narrow-minded contentment with the material world. It

¹⁵⁾ KEBLE, *Lectures on Poetry*, vol. ii, lect. xl, pp. 475, 476.

¹⁶⁾ KEBLE, *Review Life of Walter Scott, Occ. Papers & Reviews*, p. 16.

was 'the handmaid of goodness' ¹⁷⁾ and 'a most important aid to virtue and true piety' ¹⁸⁾.

He did not think it necessary that a poet should profess religion or morality explicitly, but only that he should use ideas, images and forms of expression calculated to stimulate religious and moral associations. A poet might 'do this unconsciously, even while he is preaching atheism or misanthropy' ¹⁹⁾. The only criterion for calling a man a real poet was whether he was inspired by a sense of spiritual truths behind the outward appearance of things. If this was the case, Keble gave him the title of 'genuine or primary poet', all the others were 'secondary poets' or 'mere imitators'. "Genuine poets should win us from trivial tastes or pursuits to seek those true and living remedies for all ill [by which Keble meant the holy Sacraments, God's poetry, as will be shown later on] which both Nature and her handmaid Poetry only typify and foreshadow" ²⁰⁾. A genuine poet, being a 'minister and interpreter of the mysteries that lie hid in Nature' ²¹⁾, should be accustomed to look through visible objects to their moral and sacred meanings and guide people to the lofty associations which all natural phenomena were intended to create in man. If this was neglected, 'poetry and all the other arts would be relaxing to the tone of mind' ²²⁾. "Poets cherish with their whole spirit the vision of something more beautiful, greater and more lovable than all that mortal eye can see" ²³⁾. For that very reason a poet must be a simple and sincere man, he should 'live a pure and innocent life' ²⁴⁾. Prayer is 'his best source of inspiration'. "From mere voluptuaries and those of debased imagination Nature herself and Poetry, her handmaid and interpreter, will withhold their own rich fragrance" ²⁵⁾.

It is not to be wondered at that many famous poets found no favour with Keble. Although he could appreciate their talents from a purely literary point of view — literature was only a partial or secondary occupation in life — he could not praise them as genuine poets. As he held such lofty views of the function of poetry in life, and as he did not

¹⁷⁾ KEBLE, *Lectures on Poetry*, vol. i, lect. xvii, p. 348.

¹⁸⁾ id., lect. ii, p. 37.

¹⁹⁾ KEBLE, Review of Copleston, *Occ. Papers & Reviews*, pp. 151-153.

²⁰⁾ KEBLE, *Lectures on Poetry*, vol. ii, lect. xxx, p. 271.

²¹⁾ id., lect. xxxiv, p. 338.

²²⁾ KEBLE, *Sacred Poetry*, reprinted in *Occ. Papers & Reviews*, p. 100.

²³⁾ KEBLE, *Lectures on Poetry*, vol. ii, lect. xl, p. 482.

²⁴⁾ id., vol. i, lect. iv, p. 77.

²⁵⁾ id., vol. ii, lect. xxxi, p. 293.

want to distinguish between the poet and the man, he could not but pass an unfavourable criticism on many poets because of their moral defects. To mention only a few of the great number of poets he discussed in his Lectures: he reproached Burns for being 'embittered with his misfortunes', and for exhibiting a 'mad and truly reckless craving for pleasure' ²⁶). Byron had 'sullied his splendid powers by many serious vices, inexcusable in any one, to say nothing of a great poet'. He lacked true modesty, and had given us nothing but the picture of his own mind and personality, 'excited now by an almost savage bitterness, and now by voluptuous exaltation'. Vanity was the ruling passion of 'that unfortunate person' ²⁷). Shelley followed Byron in his morbid philosophy and surpassed him even in being 'outrageous and unbridled'. He was scarcely master of himself ²⁸). Milton's chief vices were intellectual and spiritual pride ²⁹). The poets of the period preceding the Romantic School had all failed to awaken moral or religious feelings, so they were 'mere imitators'.

Keble distinguished two kinds of poetry, 'Poetry of Action' and 'Poetry of Contemplation or pastoral poetry'. They have their origin in man's feelings, which are stirred either by incidents and situations in life, or by the sight of external nature. Poets can be divided accordingly into two classes. There are the active spirits who deal with human affairs and fortunes, and there are the men of a retiring temperament who feel attracted to rural life and the study of Nature. The feelings of the former are passionate, but usually of short duration, those of the latter are quiet but stronger and more permanent. His very extensive literary studies had led Keble to the conclusion 'that some divine guidance influenced the rise and decline, each in its due course, of the two poetic classes, the active and the reflective' ³⁰). The rise of each kind of poetry apparently accorded most appropriately with the prevailing human needs and desires. "Are not the conditions of human life such that we generally find men seeking for their happiness first in action and in the pursuit of truth, and afterwards, when tired and disillusioned, taking refuge in quiet rural retreat, and then beginning to enjoy the wonderful solace which springs

²⁶) KEBLE, *Lectures on Poetry*, vol. i, lect. xiv, pp. 276-277; cf. id., vol. ii, lect. xxiv, p. 95.

²⁷) id., vol. ii, lect. xxxiv, pp. 338-339. cf. KEBLE, *Review Life of Walter Scott, Occ. Papers & Reviews*, p. 51.

²⁸) id., vol. ii, lect. xxxiv, p. 339.

²⁹) KEBLE, *Sacred Poetry*, reprinted in *Occ. Papers & Reviews*, p. 102.

³⁰) KEBLE, *Lectures on Poetry*, vol. ii, lect. xl, p. 466.

from a close insight into the forms and beauties of Nature?"³¹). The order in which the two kinds of poetry presented themselves in most literatures was, he maintained, not a mere coincidence but due to a divine plan. It was another example of God's interference in human life. "Genuine poets cannot possibly appear independently of a kind of natural sequence and defined law"³²). The most striking fact suggesting this 'presence of an overruling Providence', in the history of poetry, too, was to Keble 'the comparatively late, yet most well-timed rise of that kind of poetry whose whole interest is centred in the country and the ways of Nature'³³). Nature poetry could not arise until man began to feel the need of relief through the charms and comforts offered by Nature. It owed its beginning to Sicily (Theocritus) and its finished form to Rome (Virgil's *Georgics*). The fact that there was no pastoral poetry in Hebrew and Greek literature, he thought, could be accounted for by their different ways of looking at Nature. The Greeks showed a certain coarseness as to natural scenes because of their 'characteristic mark, thoroughly ingrained in their misguided religions, to measure all things by the mere standard of outward sense'³⁴). The Hebrew poets no doubt appreciated the beauty of Nature, but they were not in need of its comforts. They possessed something that the classical writers lacked; they enjoyed a sure hope of attaining the truth and of living happily. "They had knowledge of Him, who is the beginning and the end, and full of devotion to Him, they could neither be touched by sorrow nor weariness". They regarded all the outward forms and appearances of things as indications and 'pledges of God's nearer Presence and of a world truly divine'. They delighted in Nature, but 'they clearly fixed the heart and essence of their poetry quite otherwise, therein resembling the Greek poets, though with a higher blessing upon them'³⁵).

Keble evidently attached much importance to the distinction between Poetry of Action and Poetry of Contemplation. It was of symbolic value to him. He readily recognized the interference of 'an overruling Providence' in the order in which he thought they regularly presented themselves. The reason why he did so is given in one of his *Lectures* where he said, "The vein of poetry that seeks a life of quiet and tender feelings, that loves to hide in sheltered nooks, may stand as eternal proof how little

³¹) KEBLE, *Lectures on Poetry*, vol. ii, lect. xxx, p. 264.

³²) id., lect. xxxvi, p. 369.

³³) id., lect. xxxi, p. 274.

³⁴) id., lect. xxxi, p. 289.

³⁵) id., lect. xxx, pp. 267-269.

mortal minds are self-sufficing, whether they betake themselves to worldly business or philosophic contemplation. It might reprove the folly of those who, when the certainties of heaven are offered them, prefer to cling to the uncertainties of the earth”³⁶). In passages like this he gave expression to his hopefulness of a change in the mentality of his age, a change pointing to a religious revival. He must have followed Wordsworth’s personal development from a revolutionary to a visionary with the greatest interest. This example will no doubt have been a stimulus for him in his formative period, inspiring him to seek an outlet for his feelings of depression and melancholy in the poems which he collected afterwards in *The Christian Year*. Wordsworth’s example may even have been one of the causes of the change from the active to the reflective attitude to life which Keble experienced during his own academic career³⁷).

He admired Wordsworth as ‘one who is not merely learned and skilled in all that regards country life, but is, moreover, easily the first of modern poets’³⁸). He testified to his admiration and acknowledged his indebtedness to Wordsworth by dedicating his *Lectures on Poetry* to him in the following characteristic terms, “To William Wordsworth, true philosopher and inspired poet, who by the special gift and calling of Almighty God, whether he sang of man or of nature, failed not to lift up men’s hearts to holy things, nor ever ceased to champion the cause of the poor and simple, and so in perilous times was raised up to be a chief minister not only of sweetest poetry, but also of high and sacred truth . . .”.

What Keble welcomed more than anything else in Wordsworth’s poetry was his new approach to the real charms of Nature, his way of giving a moral and mystical interpretation to concrete objects and everyday situations, which, he thought, agreed so strikingly with the views on life and Nature of the early Fathers. Wordsworth’s poetry might help to make a return to the spirituality of the early Church much more acceptable. Of course, Keble understood that there were at least two ways in which the panorama of Nature could affect the thoughts and feelings of men. It could influence them by its charms of quiet and tranquillity, giving recreation and refreshment to people who had become weary of public life. This enjoyment might then lead people to the other way

³⁶) KEBLE, *Lectures on Poetry*, vol. ii, lect. xxxi, pp. 280-281.

³⁷) cf. Ch. I, pp. 5 ff.

³⁸) KEBLE, *Lectures on Poetry*, vol. ii, lect. xxx, p. 261.

which was the more beneficial, because then Nature stimulated them to penetrate into its inner truths, 'the deeply hidden and mysterious causes of things, that side of Nature which is characterized by secrecy and mystery, where its laws are not clear, its limits not defined, its divisions not clearly marked' ³⁹). The new approach to Nature was at any rate a token that there were men who had begun to realize how little either the study of philosophy or 'a life of action' availed to satisfy man's desires. It showed that human nature had again begun to perceive its 'need of the comfort of Nature'. By returning to Nature, men might again become aware of the harmony which was originally intended between natural objects and man's temper, thoughts and feelings ⁴⁰). Keble did not expect that the new poetry would at once make his contemporaries more religious. He only hoped that by bringing the real charms of Nature nearer to them, poetry might prepare them for the acceptance of the mysteries of religion. He was never so blinded as to suggest that nothing else was needed for a religious revival but a poetical or symbolical approach to Nature. He understood quite well that such an approach might even be in the way of a real revival. He expressed his misgivings very clearly when he said, "The mysteries of divine Truth supplied the place of poetry among our forefathers, while now the present generation readily forgoes that higher wisdom, satisfied as it would seem with that poetry which is but a shadow of it". And in another passage in the same Lecture he said bitterly, "Prayers in our churches are few and far between; as for sacramental symbols, such as the first Christians saw around them at all times and in all places, there is not the least thought of such now . . . Consequently, men gladly betake themselves to rural charms and pastoral poetry and find in them a very real satisfaction" ⁴¹). From experience Keble knew how deep-rooted the general aversion to everything mystical and mysterious was among his contemporaries. To this aversion he imputed the fact that it was a fairly long time before the poetry of the Romantic School gradually came to be accepted. He was referring to this, when in *Tract 89* he spoke about the insinuating power of the term 'mysticism', saying, "How meanly even respectable persons allow themselves to think of the highest sort of poetry, — that which invests all things, great and small, with the noblest of all

³⁹) KEBLE, *Lectures on Poetry*, vol. ii, lect. xxxii, pp. 295-298.

⁴⁰) KEBLE, Review Life of Walter Scott, *Occ. Papers & Reviews*, pp. 17-20.

⁴¹) KEBLE, *Lectures on Poetry*, vol. ii, lect. xxx, p. 269 and p. 272.

associations, — when once they have come to annex to it the notion of Mysticism”⁴²).

Keble gladly affirmed Wordsworth’s appreciation of a humble and rustic life, his preference of the simple countryman to the sophisticated townsman. He eagerly interpreted them as unmistakable symptoms of a transition from the rational to a more emotional conception of Nature⁴³). Many passages occurring in the well-known *Preface* to the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* struck a responsive chord in Keble’s heart. For example, that in country people ‘the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity’, and that in such people ‘the elementary feelings co-exist in a state of greater simplicity and therefore may be more accurately contemplated and more forcibly communicated’; that ‘the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature’. Wordsworth strongly influenced Keble’s theory of poetry.

The point in Wordsworth’s theory that Keble appreciated most was that the feelings, not reason, were said to be the source of poetry. Wordsworth defined all good poetry as consisting in ‘the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings’⁴⁴), feelings that had been stirred by the sense of a higher spiritual truth underlying all visible phenomena. Keble made it the central point of his theory that the essence of all real poetry is to be found in ‘the depth of the heart and the most sacred feelings of the men who write’⁴⁵). According to Keble, Wordsworth deserved most praise because he fulfilled the true calling of a poet in that he ‘lifted up men’s hearts to holy things’. Wordsworth himself had denoted this as his explicit aim when he said in the *Preface*, “If the views with which the poems were composed were indeed realized, a class of poetry would be produced . . . not unimportant in the quality and the multiplicity of its moral relations”⁴⁶). It had been his principal object ‘to make incidents and situations from common life interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature’⁴⁷). The feelings expressed in the poems were to give significance to the actions and situations described, not the reverse. The feelings were excited in the

⁴²) KEBLE, *Tract* 89, p. 4.

⁴³) cf. B. WILLEY, *The Eighteenth Century Background*, London 1949, esp. ch. xi, xii.

⁴⁴) WORDSWORTH, *Preface, Lyrical Ballads*, 2nd. ed., English Critical Essays, 19th century, World’s Classics, p. 5.

⁴⁵) KEBLE, *Lectures on Poetry*, vol. ii, lect. xxviii, p. 201.

⁴⁶) WORDSWORTH, *Preface, Lyrical Ballads*, p. 1.

⁴⁷) id., p. 3.

reader in order to 'lift up men's hearts to holy things'. Wordsworth's attitude to Nature was a clear indication that he ascribed a far greater stimulating power to concrete objects than to abstractions. Keble fully agreed with him that the emotions first had to be stirred before the mind could be enlightened. The idea was fully in accordance with his devotional view that concrete objects were necessary to stimulate man's will and direct it to God so as to enable him to cooperate with God in the act of faith. Keble saw his fundamental religious principle, which was philosophically based on Butler's theory of analogy, confirmed by Wordsworth's poetic principle. He naturally seized the opportunity, offered by the rise of the new poetry, to explain to his unbelieving contemporaries the workings of faith and man's responsive share in them by pointing to their correspondence with the workings of poetic emotion in the poet and the reader's responsive share in them.

From all that has been said so far it will be clear that it would be a misjudgment of Keble's aims and intentions, if we should apply a literary-critical standard to his theory of poetry. It was by no means his intention to work out a critical appreciation of this form of art for its own sake. In his very first Lecture he stated that he did not profess to give a full definition or description of poetry. He only wanted to illustrate its 'healing function', the function of 'giving relief to the poet for overcharged emotions', which he regarded as essential and determinative. In a letter to his friend Sir J. T. Coleridge he included his plan for the *Lectures*, explaining that it was his object "to consider Poetry as a vent for overcharged feelings or a full imagination, and so account for the various classes into which Poets naturally fall by reference to the various objects which are apt to fill and overpower the mind, so as to require a sort of relief". He wrote that he would try to work out 'the relation between the art of poetry and practical goodness, moral and religious' ⁴⁸). Keble, whose fundamental principle of life was that 'nothing in the world is really important except so far as it may be brought to bear upon religion' ⁴⁹), would have considered any purely literary study a waste of time and energy for a Christian ⁵⁰).

Keble's fullest definition of poetry is stated in the following terms; it is "a kind of medicine, divinely bestowed on man, which gives healing

⁴⁸) Letter of Febr. 13th, 1832, quoted in Sir J. T. COLERIDGE's *Memoir*, 3rd ed. Oxford 1870, p. 208.

⁴⁹) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. iii, p. 74.

⁵⁰) *id.*, s. i, p. 23.

relief to secret mental emotion or overpowering sorrow, yet without detriment to modest reserve, and while giving scope to enthusiasm yet rules it with order and due control" ⁵¹).

Even from the wording of this definition it is clear that Keble never lost sight of his chief aim, namely to guide people to a personal communion with God. If they knew from experience that poetry supplied a need of human nature, this experience might teach them that religion supplied an even greater need. Poetry might lead them to a deeper understanding of the psychological background of the religious attitude.

When analysing Keble's theory of poetry, we find that its three constitutive elements are: 1. the importance of the feelings and emotions; 2. the need of expression coinciding with the need of reserve; 3. the important function of the imagination.

Keble's starting-point is that fallen man constantly stands in need of healing and relief. Only that man deserves to be called a real poet, who 'can skilfully and forcefully use exquisite harmony of subject and expression as means to giving healing and relief' ⁵²). God, the divine Poet, uses natural reality to guide man to his eternal happiness.

We shall now deal with the three constitutive elements in their bearing on poetry. All Keble said about them is obviously applicable to religion as well.

I. *Feelings and Emotions*

Their poetical merit consists in the sympathy which they excite. The feelings of dissatisfaction, arising in man when his mind is overwhelmed by the contemplation of life, are symptoms of an instinctive longing for sympathy and consolation.

In several passages of his *Lectures on Poetry* Keble acknowledged his indebtedness to Aristotle ⁵³). It is evident that the latter's principle of catharsis played an important part in Keble's theory. He endorsed Aristotle's view that the catharsis of emotions is for the soul what the physician's purge is for the body. Pent-up emotions are far more dangerous than emotions rightly controlled. Poetic expression is one of the means to control emotions. Both for himself and for the reader the poet is therefore to be regarded as a 'medical officer' for the soul ⁵⁴).

⁵¹) KEBLE, *Lectures on Poetry*, vol. i, lect. i, p. 22.

⁵²) id., lect. iv, p. 53.

⁵³) e.g. id., vol. ii, lect. xxviii, p. 219; lect. xxx, p. 264.

⁵⁴) cf. B. WILLEY, *The Eighteenth Century Background*, London 1949, ch. xii, pp. 253 ff.

Keble often spoke of 'poetic frenzies' which act as safety-valves, preserving men from actual madness. He gave to his lectures the very appropriate title of *De poeticae vi medica*.

Guided by Aristotle and Wordsworth, Keble founded his theory on the thesis that in every human being there lives a continuous sense of need, a desire for some objects which are absent, a restless longing for a better life. Such feelings are strongest when the mind is overwhelmed with impressions of 'the vicissitudes of human affairs', 'the marvellous ordered symmetry of the universe', and especially of 'the holy vision of true and divine goodness' ⁵⁵). Human emotions are excited either by experiences of happiness, suggesting a perfect state which lies beyond life on earth, or by experiences of sadness and distress, suggesting the contrast between what life really is and what it might be. Natural scenery appeals to the feelings by its tranquil beauty and calm or by its vastness and mystery, inspiring man with awe and wonder. Such reactions are inherent in human nature. They show clearly that it is perfectly natural for man to be dissatisfied and disillusioned with his present state and to long for perfection ⁵⁶). This longing will become the stronger as the objects longed for are loftier and more absorbing. The attractive force of objects becomes the stronger as they are more difficult to attain. Then they fill the whole mind and cause man to view all things in relation to them ⁵⁷).

Keble was convinced that no poet, indeed, no human being is without some 'master feeling', which focuses the 'many fluctuating and varying distractions of the mind' on one special purpose ⁵⁸). In this connection Aristotle spoke of 'enthusiasm', a term which Keble interpreted as a passionate devotion to some class of objects or train of thought. In his opinion, it is especially this 'master feeling' which is a preparation for and a stimulus to activity. It forces the poet to express himself and the reader to participate in his poetry.

II. *Expression and Reserve*

An instinctive need of expression answers to the instinctive longing for sympathy. Whenever the mind is moved by passionate emotions or depressed by sorrow, man naturally looks for relief. Direct exhibition of

⁵⁵) KEBLE, *Lectures on Poetry*, vol. i, lect. i, p. 20.

⁵⁶) cf. KEBLE, *Review Life of Walter Scott, Occ. Papers & Reviews*, p. 14.

⁵⁷) id., p. 15.

⁵⁸) cf. KEBLE, *Lectures on Poetry*, vol. ii, lect. xxiv, pp. 92 ff.

such feelings is, however, impeded by their very strength and intensity, but particularly by an instinctive delicacy which causes him to shrink back from exposing his most intimate thoughts and feelings. He is afraid that they will not meet with sympathy and understanding in other people. In such circumstances a man will therefore have to find out indirect ways of expressing himself in a concrete form. With the help of his intellect and artistic skill he might be able to give a more or less exact description of the object desired, but sympathy and relief are not the results of the perception of likeness or external resemblance. The reader, Keble said, might possibly be pleased with the success of the artist and perhaps with the beauty of the representation, but 'because the heart and the fancy are asleep the while, we cannot consent to call this poetry' ⁵⁹). Such an exact description would be a product of the intellect and would merely address itself to the understanding. Keble never wanted to consider anything that left the feelings untouched and was therefore no stimulus to activity, as properly belonging to poetry ⁶⁰).

Keble called the need of expression and the need of controlling this expression 'the great instinctive necessities' of our human nature. The real source of all poetry is to be found in their confluence. Poetry makes it possible for man to combine shyness with eagerness, reserve with enthusiasm. It is 'the indirect expression of overpowering but impeded feelings' ⁶¹).

Reserve, 'the pivot round which the theory turns' is the origin of all images, similes and more or less complicated poetic forms. Their indirectness hides all intimate emotions from those who do not sympathize with them. The poet finds a source of comfort in all sorts of poetic work, even in the pains he has to take to make the lines end rightly. "The great and earnest soul tries every possible means, selects only the best, spares neither labour nor learning, if only he may thus produce an adequate and beautiful representation of that in which his heart delights" ⁶²). But at

⁵⁹) KEBLE, Review of Copleston, *Occ. Papers & Reviews*, p. 157. In 1814, when the review of Copleston's lectures was written, Keble apparently had not yet learned to make the subtle distinction between Imagination and Fancy which he used in his first lecture on poetry in 1832. The context, however, leaves no doubt that already in the review he meant 'imagination'.

⁶⁰) cf. id., p. 162. cf. Coleridge's distinction between Understanding and Reason in B. WILLEY, *Nineteenth Century Studies*, London 1949, ch. ii.

⁶¹) KEBLE, Review Life of Walter Scott, *Occ. Papers & Reviews*, pp. 8-11.

⁶²) KEBLE, *Lectures on Poetry*, vol. i, lect. vi, p. 91; cf. vol. ii, lect. xxiv, pp. 92-101.

the same time it remains an essential principle of genuine poetry 'to seek retreat from publicity, to avoid the full light, to be coy and hesitant in unveiling its secrets save to any one whom it believes touched with like enthusiasm' ⁶³). Mystery is therefore an essential element of poetry. It is characteristic of the poetic to keep something secret. That is the reason why it always yields a great wealth of thoughts to those who take the trouble to meditate upon a poem and try to penetrate into it 'as a worshipper would approach a Sacrament, with reverence and with a determination to press inward to its heart' ⁶⁴).

III. *Imagination and Association* ⁶⁵)

Poetry is by no means a matter of feeling only. Reason, too, has its part to play. Only because of the conjunction of all man's qualities can poetry perform its chief function in life, which is 'to minister its healing touch' to disordered Nature. Poetry has an ordering and controlling function.

While the poet is looking for an adequate but reserved way of expressing himself, the presence of reason is distinctly felt. By his reason the poet is guided 'amid a thousand paths to take the right' ⁶⁶), and 'his anxieties and ponderings which were spreading hither and thither like a flood, are now controlled and confined to a single channel' ⁶⁷). While his reason tries to subdue his emotions and restore order in the confusion, all other things are seen in relation to the objects longed for. All the feelings are directed to one concrete object or situation. Reason under this particular aspect is called the imagination, the faculty which registers and preserves impressions from concrete objects and situations in the form of images, the faculty which assimilates all these images, highly coloured by emotions, and draws them all together in one image or representation. Consciously or unconsciously the imagination gives the representation outline and ornament. Then, as by chance — or, Keble added, 'I may say by Providence' — the words shape themselves into

⁶³) KEBLE, *Lectures on Poetry*, vol. ii, lect. xxiv, pp. 103-104.

⁶⁴) cf. W. LOCK, *John Keble, a Biography*, 5th ed., London 1893, pp. 48-49.

⁶⁵) For much of what will be said here I am indebted to B. WILLEY, who gives an excellent summary of the birth and growth of this idea in his *Nineteenth Century Studies*, London 1949, ch. i. Another very instructive book on the imagination in romantic theory is J. BAYLEY, *The Romantic Survival, a study in poetic evolution*, Constable, London 1957.

⁶⁶) KEBLE, *Lectures on Poetry*, vol. i, lect. i, p. 22.

⁶⁷) id., lect. iv, pp. 58-65.

rhythm and cadence, and by those rhythmical lines 'the ailing minds feel soothed' as by 'a regular touch of the hand' ⁶⁸).

The healing function of poetry is not confined to the poet. Poetry also excites the reader's imagination. From the beauty of the thing expressed, or from the skill of the poet, the reader is stirred to become active and 'fill up the picture for himself' ⁶⁹) by means of association. He is stimulated to find out the connection between the images or representations and 'the cognate or similar things' with which they are to be associated. The poet 'wanders out of his province, if he attempts to teach except by association. He must be content with sign and gesture' ⁷⁰). Consequently, there must be 'some elasticity' in the reader's mind, Keble said, 'otherwise it will not vibrate to the touch of the artist' ⁷¹). If the reader surrenders himself to the real meaning of the poem, "he will have little leisure for mere ornament and prettiness, not even for those delightful charms which are removed at furthest distance from Epicurean indulgence, but he will approach very nearly to the secret truths of a higher philosophy" ⁷²).

In the imagination we touch one of the central questions of nineteenth century metaphysical thought. It was the English poets who resisted rationalistic philosophy by emphasizing the whole personality of man instead of his reason only. They pointed to the correspondence between the intellectual and the moral faculties, thus laying more stress on operative than on speculative knowledge. The crucial point was, whether man merely reflects the impressions he receives from the external world, or if he is able to assimilate and transform them ⁷³). The fundamental problem was the relationship between the individual and the universe.

The early romantic poets were intensely conscious of their metaphysical responsibility. They had such a high opinion of their position, chiefly because they were convinced that it was the task of poetry to arrest the pernicious course of rationalistic philosophy and bridge the

⁶⁸) KEBLE, *Lectures on Poetry*, vol. ii, lect. xxiv, pp. 92-101.

⁶⁹) KEBLE, *Review Copleston, Occ. Papers & Reviews*, p. 156.

⁷⁰) id., p. 159.

⁷¹) id., p. 156.

⁷²) KEBLE, *Lectures on Poetry*, vol. ii, lect. xxi, p. 26. The 'higher philosophy' is, of course, religion. In Keble's opinion, poetry has no right to exist, if it does not serve a religious purpose. All reality has God for its final object.

⁷³) Mr. M. H. ABRAMS, who has written an interesting study on the romantic theory, gave his work the very descriptive title of *The Mirror and the Lamp*, alluding by it to the passively reflective and the actively illuminating quality ascribed to the mind in nineteenth century philosophy.

gulf by which this philosophy had separated the individual from his natural surroundings. They regarded poetry no longer as a criticism of life, but wanted to make it a revelation of the hidden life of Nature. No longer content to speculate on facts derived from experience, as for instance Butler had done in his *Analogy*, they aimed at penetrating into the phenomena of the external world. Because of the unity of all creation, they felt assured it would be possible for them to participate in the life of Nature and give expression to it as it were from inside its phenomena.

The influence of German philosophers, especially of Kant, is clearly discernible here. Still, the application of Butler's analogical reasoning to such ancient philosophical principles as Plato's and Aristotle's imitation-theory may have contributed to the development of the nineteenth century metaphysical views on the process of perception. Though Coleridge had probably learned from Kant that it is the main function of the imagination to order and synthesize visual experience, he and the other early romantic poets added an element that was absent in Kantian philosophy, when they started from the conviction that moral values form an integral part of life. In their opinion, art could not possibly be dissociated from morality. They may very well have been influenced by Butler's fundamental principle of the close correspondence between the visible and the moral world.

Coleridge looked for the solution of the metaphysical question at issue in distinguishing between Fancy and Imagination. He defined the former as the faculty by which man creates for himself the world of everyday appearances, the cold and matter-of-fact world of rationalism. The latter was to him the transforming power by which man can transcend this dead world, and attain to reality in the true sense of the word, the unity of all created things.

His ideas about the function of the imagination are scattered all over his *Biographia Literaria* and his *Lectures on Shakespeare*. Nowhere did he express himself fully on the subject. It may therefore be worth while to quote the following distinctive sayings which Basil Willey has collected from Coleridge's works.

"Imagination is the mind in its highest state of creative insight and alertness. Its acts are acts of growth, and display themselves in breaking down the hard commonplaceness which so easily besets us, and in remoulding this stubborn raw material into new and living wholes . . . Its function is to see all things as one, and the one in all things . . . It struggles to idealize and to unify 'dead' objects. When imaginatively seen they can be vitalized with an energy which comes indeed from

within the mind, but which is also, mysteriously, their own life so revealed. The cold world of objects will not seem alive, unless the poet takes the initiative."

Of Fancy Coleridge said that "it merely constructs patterns out of ready-made materials. It juxtaposes images, but does not fuse them into unity. Its products are like mechanical mixtures in which the ingredients, though closely together, remain the same as when apart" ⁷⁴).

Coleridge was convinced that, if his teaching found general acceptance, it would mean that he had triumphed over the old philosophical tradition of Hume and Hartley. Ultimately, it would not only prove to be a success in the field of philosophy but chiefly in the field of religion. If, in refutation of these thinkers who had maintained that the mind is absolutely passive in the perception of natural reality, he could prove to satisfaction that perception is not merely mechanical registration but an associating and assimilating activity of the mind, this would mean 'the overthrow of the irreligious metaphysics of modern infidels' ⁷⁵).

It is not at all surprising, therefore, that Keble expected much for a religious revival from the effects of romantic poetry and of the metaphysical views underlying it. Its sense of mystery, its unifying vision of reality, its recognition of the vitalizing function of the imagination by means of which the energy inherent in 'dead' objects may come alive, all such ideas could not but be a welcome support in the struggle between faith and rationalism. Such ideas were especially welcome because they prepared the way for the recognition of the reality of sacramental grace.

It cannot be ascertained whether Keble was influenced by Coleridge's views. He never mentioned his name in his writings. It is, however, beyond any doubt that Keble founded his symbolic apprehension of natural reality on the distinction between Fancy and Imagination.

Keble first used the term 'creative energy', meaning by it the imaginative activity of the human mind, in his review of Copleston's *Praelectiones Academicæ* ⁷⁶). The review was published in 1814, three years before Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*. It shows clearly how intensely the problem of the functional value of poetry already occupied him while he was still a young man. In criticizing Copleston's liberal views, Keble

⁷⁴) cf. B. WILLEY, *Nineteenth Century Studies*, London 1949, pp. 16-20.

⁷⁵) cf. S. T. COLERIDGE, *Biographia Literaria*, Everyman, 1934, ch. xiii.

⁷⁶) EDWARD COPLESTON (1776-1849) was appointed professor of poetry at Oxford in 1802. He showed himself a great critic and a master of Latin. Both Newman and Keble greatly admired the lucidity of his lectures, though Newman said that their style was more 'Coplestonian than Ciceronian'.

stated his own 'poetical creed'. He directed his criticism chiefly against Copleston's interpretation of the term 'imitation'.

Copleston maintained that it was the final object of poetry to give pleasure, and that pleasure is derived partly from the imitation of some beauty in the object imitated, partly from the perfectness of the imitation itself. Evidently, he still followed in the steps of eighteenth century literary criticism which weighed the value of poetry by its effect upon a passive reader. Keble, however, insisted upon the element of activity. According to him, the mere perception of external resemblance could never constitute the test of excellence in art. Poetical pleasure cannot possibly be made dependent, he said, on the perception of likeness between the object imitated and its representation, for in that case there is no activity whatever on the part of the reader. The reader only feels that his mind is acted upon. There can only be pleasure, if 'the mind is excited to fill up the picture for itself' ⁷⁷).

This single statement is already proof enough that Keble took his stand by the romantic school of literary criticism. Already as early as 1814, it was his poetical creed that the region of poetry is divided between 'sympathy' and 'phantasy'. It is interesting to observe how he defined the respective contents of these terms. Sympathy, he said, is chiefly concerned with 'moral associations'. "It warns us against selfishness . . . it stays our steps in their course . . . it tells us what our duty is in this world". Phantasy is concerned with 'religious associations'. "It warns us against despondency . . . it points us to our goal, and tells us of our reward hereafter" ⁷⁸). He did not doubt that everybody would agree with him as regards sympathy, for 'it has been for 2000 years an axiom in criticism that to purify the affections by terror and pity is the final cause of tragedy' and of all poetry. He was not so sure, however, whether the part he ascribed to phantasy or the imagination would be so readily accepted.

His argument in defence of his contention clearly shows the influence of Butler's principle of analogy, that is to say, the assumption of a close correspondence between the visible and the moral world. Applying this principle, he maintained that 'if there be any one term which comprises in itself all the peculiar pleasures of poetry, it is association' ⁷⁹). For association man is dependent on his imagination, the faculty which

⁷⁷) KEBLE, Review Copleston, *Occ. Papers & Reviews*, p. 156.

⁷⁸) id., p. 158.

⁷⁹) id., p. 151.

enables him 'to realize within himself something unreal', that means, something beyond the world of sense. Keble admitted that the efficient causes both of beauty and of poetry may vary in proportion to the various associations of each individual reader, but it did not follow, he thought, that there can be no uniformity in this variety. It was owing to his liberal-mindedness that Copleston had censured those who restricted the pleasures of poetry to one single source. His censure was the consequence of his denying the unity of all reality and the convergence of all human activity in God. Keble thought that it was evident for those who were conscious of the unity of all creation, that the pleasures of poetry, just like those of any other human activity, were necessarily restricted to one source, namely 'to the awakening of some moral or religious feeling' ⁸⁰). Fully aware of the difficulty of proving the truth of his statement, he added, "It would require a volume to unfold the principle, and the experience of a life to prove it". Some twenty years later, he attempted to unfold it in his *Lectures on Poetry*. He made it the chief aim of all his pastoral activities to make his fellow-Churchmen experience its truth by impressing upon them the reality of sacramental grace.

Already in 1814, he had come to the conclusion that imaginative thinking, the symbolic apprehension of natural reality characteristic of the early Fathers of the Ancient Church, was the one weapon to fight rationalism. Because of the associative working of the imagination, 'poetic' was the direct opposite of 'rationalistic', the one representing 'participation', the other 'disintegration'. Imaginative poetry could therefore help man to rise above 'the ignorant present' and point out to him the way to religion, for "what can tend more strongly to make man feel his own dignity; to disencumber him of earthly affections, and lift him nearer to what he once was, and what he may be again, than the exercise and invigoration of a power so totally independent of material things, so much at variance with the senses as this is?". Concluding his early attempt to show that all pleasures of the imagination are 'grounded on the higher associations', he added, "If then all the honest pleasures of the imagination have this high kindred . . . what hinders but that the poetry of the imagination, as well as that of the heart, be owned to have its beginning and end in religious and moral associations?" ⁸¹).

Keble's anthropology is founded on the principle of unity. God is the centre of all reality, because He is its cause and final object. Everything

⁸⁰) KEBLE, Review Copleston, *Occ. Papers & Reviews*, p. 152.

⁸¹) id., p. 158.

is focused on Him. Personal communion with God constitutes the chief good of a reasonable creature, because this communion is evidently the only purpose of all existence. Consequently, human nature may be considered as the keystone of all issues in life, for God must have bestowed on man the faculties necessary to reach his final aim. Man should therefore deal with religious problems as he is accustomed to deal with other fundamental problems of practical life.

The principle of unity had been disturbed by rationalism. It had placed man in the centre of life and it had driven the wedge of reasoning in between reality and the individual. Man was thus prevented from having direct experience of the immaterial, present in the material object.

Religion being entirely dependent on the unified vision of reality, a religious revival could only be expected after the rationalistic or scientific approach to natural reality had been replaced by the imaginative or symbolic interpretation of Nature.

Butler's analogical reasoning was so important in Keble's opinion, because he considered it as a form of thinking intermediate between rationalism and symbolic thinking. Butler's *Analogy* had been an excellent defence of Christianity in the age of reason. In the deistic atmosphere of thought, he had found adequate means to prove that God existed and was actually present in the world of man. He had compared the natural and the religious order of things as being the two parallel sets of facts of which God is the Creator and the Governor. Butler, however, was too much a child of his time not to represent the problem in a speculative form. In so far as he regarded religion as a practical concern, it was to him a matter of morals rather than a mystical reality. To a certain extent, he had succeeded in replacing scientific, deductive reasoning by the more practical and less definite authority of the conscience. In a period proud of its certainty, he had introduced a sense of uncertainty and mystery as inherent in human nature. Still, his ideas about the mysterious relation between nature and grace were as yet cool and rational.

When, under the influence of romantic poetry, conditions were getting more favourable to make people again aware of the unity of the individual and the universe, Keble thought the times were ripe to carry on Butler's argument and throw a fuller and more vivid light on faith as a mystical reality. After poetry, with its views on the associative workings of man's imagination, had prepared the way, a new attempt had to be made to show that God was not only a living reality, but that He was

permanently and actively present in the world, occupying Himself with each individual person and availing Himself of man's natural qualities and of all natural phenomena to draw man nearer to Him.

The best way of conveying this momentous truth to his contemporaries, Keble thought, was to point out to them the analogy which existed between the 'creative processes' of poetry and religious belief. The *poetical interpretation* of natural phenomena, in which all things are invested with higher associations, might help to smooth the way for the acceptance of the *moral interpretation* of nature, in which all visible things are regarded as means intended for the 'healing' of the soul. In its turn, the moral interpretation might lead to the acceptance of the *mystical* or *prophetical interpretation*, in which all visible objects are regarded as 'shadows of the good and true things to come' ⁸²). Along these lines, Keble hoped, the scientific use of the material world might gradually be replaced by the mystical or sacramental use of it. Then Anglicans would have returned to the spirit of the times of the early Fathers, 'when every care was taken to exclude views merely scientific and physical, to prevent our acquiescing in that kind of knowledge as though in itself it were any great thing' ⁸³).

In drawing up his theory of poetry Keble aimed at making it clear to his fellow-Churchmen that poetry and religious belief 'spring from the same source'. The feelings of dissatisfaction and disillusionment, for which many people hoped to find an outlet and a remedy in poetry, could in fact only be relieved by a return to a life of faith and dependence on divine grace. Their return to Nature was at any rate a step in the right direction. It was an indication that they were beginning to give up the illusion that they would ever be able to appease their longing for a better life by concentrating all their energy and knowledge on material and cultural progress. Poetry had made them conscious again of their needs, and it had suggested to them how these needs might be partly and temporarily satisfied. Its greatest benefit had been, Keble thought, that it had shown them the comfort of participating in the hidden life of Nature. It had also made them aware of the controlling and vitalizing function of their imagination, bringing home to them the necessity of 'confining all their emotions to one channel' and focusing their whole personality on one object.

Poetry might help them to understand that no feeling penetrates so

⁸²) KEBLE, *Tract 89*, p. 112. cf. p. 143.

⁸³) *id.*, p. 137.

deeply into the human heart and takes such entire possession of it as the thought of a divine power and of eternity. It might help them to recognize that this is man's innate 'master feeling', intentionally created in man by God.

Imaginative thinking would help them to interpret natural reality as the utterance of the Author of Nature, as God's reserved means of expressing His feelings of love for those who are in sympathy with Him. In Keble's opinion, natural reality has its origin in God's economy, in the same way as poetic images have their origin in the poet's reserve. Thus poetry might bring people nearer to the Sacraments, 'God's own Poetry', the natural phenomena through which God wants to communicate His divine grace to man.

Poetry may be said to have a 'healing function', because the imagination, active in it, restores order in the confusion of man's reactions upon the world. The imagination causes all other things to be seen in relation to the object longed for. This faculty, enabling man to realize things beyond the world of sense, might be a great help to make man put his trust and confidence in supernatural reality.

The difference between imagination and faith, as seen by Keble, consists in the element of trust and confidence in the Author of Nature. The imagination is an associating faculty, faith is more. It is 'making a venture on things unseen'. Convinced of his insufficiency, man puts his trust in God and His Revelation. He 'looks to the eternal things out of sight . . . and neglects in a manner the things which are in sight' ⁸⁴).

⁸⁴) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, Preface, p. lxvii.

CHAPTER V

SYMBOLISM AND SACRAMENTALISM

The most disquieting symptom of the precarious state of the Church of England was to Keble the growing indifference to the reality of sacramental grace. Its denial meant to him the denial of the essence of Revelation. On the general acceptance of this central doctrine depended the very life of the Anglican communion as part of the Mystical Body of Christ. All Keble's activities were focused on its vindication.

How much the Church had become an instrument in the hands of a liberal government may be gathered from the authority attributed to the decisions of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council on religious subjects like eternal punishment, the prophetic character of the Old Testament, sacramental grace and the presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. This Committee consisted of six laymen and the two Archbishops and the Bishop of London as assessors¹⁾. Their decisions were regarded as the official expressions of the mind of the Church. Indeed, the fears of the leaders of the Oxford Movement were well-founded that before long all the functions of the Church would be usurped by the State.

The judgment given by the Committee in the Gorham case²⁾ (1850) could not leave any serious Churchman in doubt about the chaotic situation. In this case, the question at issue was the objective efficacy of Baptism. Gorham asserted that in the baptism of infants no benefit was conferred, because infants could not be worthy recipients unless they had previously been made so through God's prevenient grace. In the case of adults, he maintained that baptismal grace depended on the good dispo-

¹⁾ Ex officio the whole of the Cabinet are members of the Privy Council. In theory, the Judicial Committee is a committee of the Privy Council, in reality it has nothing whatever to do with it. It consists largely of the same judges as hear appeals in the House of Lords. One of its functions is to hear appeals from the ecclesiastical courts. In ecclesiastical cases provision is made for the attendance of prelates as assessors. In theory, the Committee does not pronounce judgments, but merely advises the sovereign to give judgment in a particular way. See EVERYMAN ENCYCLOPAEDIA, vol. 10.

²⁾ cf. note, Ch. III, p. 67.

sition and the faith of the recipient. Gorham evidently regarded the Sacrament merely as a sign of something previously given, but that did not prevent him from being admitted to a benefice in the Anglican Church³). Other illustrative facts showing how much opinions were divided within the Church of England are for instance that the English Church Union, founded in 1860, held that the sacramental system is the basis and sustaining power of the spiritual life, whereas the Church Association, founded in 1865, declared war upon sacramentarianism and sacerdotalism⁴).

The vague formulations on the Sacraments, contained in the Thirty-nine Articles, certainly did not offer a firm religious anchorage, although it must be admitted that the text of the Articles approved in 1571, to which the present text goes back, omits the condemnation of the 'ex opere operato' conferring of grace contained in the 42 Articles of 1553⁵). Consequently, the Tractarians clearly saw it as their task to carry on the tradition of the seventeenth century Caroline Divines, who generally held the pre-Reformation doctrine that Baptism is really and objectively the only means of justification. They were convinced that only through these divines could the nineteenth century Church of England remain traditionally connected with the Primitive Church.

This alarming stage in the spiritual development of the Church was, of course, only reached after many years of less open enmity. Keble, who had already for a long time watched the ecclesiastical situation with growing anxiety, had sounded a clear note of warning in 1850, when at the time of the Gorham case he published two Pastoral Tracts on Church matters, entitled *Trial of Doctrine* and *A Call to speak out*⁶). In them

³) Sacramental grace is still an undecided point in the doctrine of the Church of England, as may appear from a passage occurring in the report of the Doctrinal Commission of 1922, "As regards the specific manner in which the sacraments as such convey grace we are divided. Some of us hold that by the sacraments grace is directly conferred; some hold that the sacraments convey opportunities of grace, which it remains for the recipient to appropriate. Others . . . would prefer to say that sacraments, like spoken prayers, both express and confirm a state of mind and will which fits us profitably to receive the gift of God". *Report* publ. London 1938, p. 130. cf. B. LEEMING, *Principles of Sacramental Theology*, Longmans, 2nd ed., 1957, pp. 21, 22.

⁴) cf. F. W. CORNISH, *The English Church in the 19th century*, London 1910, vol. i, pp. 110, 114, 135.

⁵) cf. E. J. BICKNELL, *A Theological Introduction to the 39 Articles*, London 1919, pp. 443-452.

⁶) see *Occ. Papers & Reviews*, pp. 201, 219.

he had set forth his main grievances against the Judicial Committee on account of the power given to laymen to decide finally in Church causes. After the Synod of Exeter (1850), he wrote a long article for the *Christian Remembrancer* of 1851⁷⁾ to bring it home to the reading public that at the Synod the doctrine of sacramental grace had been expressly affirmed, and that this synodical judgment was to be regarded as an authoritative repudiation of the erroneous doctrine sanctioned in the Gorham case. In this article he pointed out that it was getting 'high time for those among us who are religiously jealous of the doctrine of sacramental grace, to consider calmly from what their jealousy arises, from dread of formalism, dread of a low standard of self-reliance, or from unwillingness to acknowledge the Lord's working in instruments seemingly so weak and unworthy, and to the natural man so improbable' ⁸⁾. If the last supposition appeared to be the correct one, which Keble thought most likely, he had to warn his fellow-Churchmen that it was a strong proof of their wrong attitude towards natural reality. If carried a little further, he said, it could not but lead to doubt and disbelief of the Incarnation itself.

Keble rejected this attitude, because it showed both the influences of rationalism and of 'Protestantism', which concurred in so far that both lacked the sense of mystery. Both neglected or denied the harmonious relation between the supernatural and the natural, or between grace and nature. It was Keble's opinion that the unified interpretation of the reality created by God had been undermined ever since the time of the Reformation. From that time onwards grace had been more and more divested of its mystical and sacramental elements ⁹⁾. He considered the prominence given to direct grace, dependent on preaching and prayer and independent of the outward forms of the sacramental elements, one of the most characteristic notes of the Reformation. In this it betrayed its close connection with the rationalistic way of approaching nature ¹⁰⁾. Speaking about the Gorham case, Keble observed, "With the school of Zwinglius the modern school denies baptismal regeneration on grounds common to the Socinians, that inward grace can in no real sense be conferred by outward signs, nor made dependent on man's ministerial

⁷⁾ see *Occ. Papers & Reviews*, pp. 251 ff.

⁸⁾ KEBLE, Synod of Exeter, *Occ. Papers & Reviews*, p. 304.

⁹⁾ cf. C. DAWSON, *The Spirit of the Oxf. Mov.*, London 1945, p. 31. cf. CORNISH, *The English Church in the 19th century*, London 1910, vol. i, pp. 319-321.

¹⁰⁾ cf. BRILIOTH, *The Anglican Revival*, London 1925, p. 318.

acts'' ¹¹⁾). It was only too evident that a great many clergymen, some of them in very high positions, were inclined to consider things in sober reason only, with the result that they regarded the Sacraments as mere assurances of God's promise of 'non-imputation of sin', or as confirmations of man's confidence that his sins were not imputed to him because of Christ's merits. They held that Baptism gave man his first assurance of forgiveness, and that the Eucharist stirred up the memory and the conviction of that forgiveness ¹²⁾).

In his phenomenological study of the religious belief of the Reformed Churches, entitled *Karakteristiek van het Reformatorisch Christendom*, Dr. W. van de Pol explains that the cardinal point of difference between the Reformation and the Catholic Church lies not so much in what Revelation is taken to contain as in what is looked upon as the essence of Revelation. According to him, all disputed points in the dogmatic, ecclesiastical, spiritual, liturgical and devotional fields are reducible to the one distinction between the 'Revelation of the Word' and the 'Revelation of a supernatural reality'. The Reformation lays the main stress on the fact that at one time God has revealed Himself to mankind in the shape of the Incarnate Word, and that since the death of Christ the Word has remained present among us in a purely verbal form, accessible to man in Holy Scripture. By hearing and believing the Word as it is explained to him from the Bible, man can make it into a living reality for himself. So his act of faith consists in his believing assent to the Word revealed. The Sacraments are merely figurative, for their efficacy depends on the faith of the recipient. In contradistinction to this conception of Revelation, the Catholic Church holds that the supernatural was not manifested only once in Christ's Incarnation, but that this manifestation is constantly continued in the mysteries of the Church, the Holy Eucharist, the Communion of Saints, the Sacraments and the state of grace of the faithful. The faith of Catholics is brought to bear on an ontological reality of a supernatural order which, through Revelation, has become part of our natural reality in the shape of sacramental symbols ¹³⁾).

Keble clearly took the side of the Catholic Church, when he observed in his article on the Synod of Exeter, "the real great struggle between faith and unbelief . . . has all along turned upon this question, 'Is your

¹¹⁾ KEBLE, *Call to speak out*, reprinted in *Occ. Papers & Reviews*, p. 232.

¹²⁾ cf. B. LEEMING, *Principles of Sacramental Theology*, Longmans, 1957, 2nd ed., p. 13.

¹³⁾ cf. VAN DE POL, *Karakteristiek van het Reformatorisch Christendom*, Roermond 1952, especially ch. ii, iii and iv.

watchword *Verbum Dei* or *Verbum Deus*?' Are men to be saved by teaching of God's truth, affecting their minds as true and good philosophy might do; or [are they to be saved] by transformation and actual union with the Son of God, incarnate to this very end, that He might first give Himself for us, and afterwards give us Himself? All depends . . . upon the answer to that one question. Those who deny sacramental grace, if consistent, must accept the former alternative; those who acknowledge it, are pledged to the latter" ¹⁴). To Keble the 'Personal Word' was everywhere present in the written Word, 'if we could but discern Him' ¹⁵). Christ's communication of Himself was to him the only principle of life to all that lives ¹⁶).

The defence of the doctrine of sacramental grace involves a great many metaphysical and theological problems, in fact the ultimate problems of human existence. Chief among them are the meaning and extent of the term 'reality', man's position in this reality and his means of acquiring satisfactory knowledge about it, the meaning of the term 'grace', the relation between the Sacraments and grace, the relation between faith and the Sacraments.

Not being a philosopher, and by nature indeed averse to all theorizing, Keble did not cover the whole field systematically or comprehensively. However, from his writings we may conclude that he studied these problems thoroughly and had formed definite opinions about them, which served him as a firm foundation for his consistent and persistent activities in the defence of his Church. His great stimulus was the firm conviction that man's destiny was at stake, and that his salvation was entirely dependent on whether he accepted this doctrine and made it the essential part of his outlook on life. In this chapter we shall try to give a more or less comprehensive reconstruction of Keble's views on these fundamental problems.

Keble made the right understanding of the term 'reality', including the recognition of the fact that man's eternal happiness is dependent on it, the basis of his division of people into believers and unbelievers. He stated expressly that, if he called some men unbelieving, he did not mean to say that those persons were altogether irreligious, nor did he call others believing because they professed the true faith of Christ. For him, the only criterion was belief in the reality of the supernatural and its sacra-

¹⁴) KEBLE, Synod of Exeter, *Occ. Papers & Reviews*, p. 305.

¹⁵) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. i, s. xxxi, pp. 313-317.

¹⁶) KEBLE, *Studia Sacra*, p. 20.

mental representation in the natural. He was convinced that only those persons deserved to be called believing who realized and accepted that 'they are, or ought to be, truly and really in a supernatural state, changed in their condition, separated from ordinary men, in a way analogous to the condition and separation of the children of Israel, especially in the wilderness'. Unbelievers were, in his opinion, all those who 'account the times of supernatural interference, if ever they really existed, to be now passed away' ¹⁷). The loss of the sense of mystery was the chief cause of all unbelief and as such the greatest danger threatening the existence of the Anglican Church. If this Church suffered itself to be led by the rationalistic or 'protestantized' approach to nature, he feared it would induce its earnest members either to lapse into religious indifference or to go over to Rome, where, as Newman said, 'free scope was still given to the feelings of awe, mystery, tenderness, reverence, devotedness and other feelings which may be especially called Catholic' ¹⁸).

The manner of looking at reality also determined the task ascribed to theology. The scientific way of thinking had extended itself to matters of religious belief. Owing to the development of a positivistic natural science, which supplied a theoretical basis for the technical control of nature and thus became the source of material progress, there had been a marked change in man's ideas about his position in the world and his relation to the natural objects surrounding him. All nature came to be regarded as useful and transformable raw material for man's progress. The nineteenth century scientist no longer stopped at the intellectual and speculative observation of nature as philosophers of former periods had done. Experimenting, he proceeded to the creative transformation of the various natural objects into new and serviceable forms. Seeing this as his main task, he confined himself to the observation of everything around him, trusting that in the end he would be able to get to the bottom of the physical possibilities hidden in nature. If only he could adapt his technical powers of observation and penetration to the scientific problems with which he was confronted, he would be ensured of the success he aimed at, the control of nature and its subservience to all man's needs and desires. In this, he believed, consisted his complete satisfaction and ultimate happiness. As regards religion and theology, it was thought quite natural to submit matters of faith to human judgment and to limit religious belief by the power of human understanding. In the inter-

¹⁷) KEBLE, Synod of Exeter, *Occ. Papers & Reviews*, p. 252.

¹⁸) NEWMAN, *Via Media*, p. 386.

pretation of Scripture nothing ought to be explained in a figurative or typical sense except on the authority of Scripture itself. The early Fathers were not to be taken seriously. They represented theology in its infancy, a stage in theological development which modern theology had long since outgrown. Therefore the moral or mystical allusions, which the Fathers deduced from the contemplation of nature, could no longer be considered as forming part of theology.

Quite in accordance with his ideas about the attainment of knowledge, Keble did not think much of the practical value of that part of philosophy which is called natural theology. In contrast with his liberal contemporaries, who overrated it, he maintained that the only task that could possibly be assigned to it was the confirmation and application of the truths revealed by God. The knowledge of God, which is entirely based on Revelation, and which he sometimes used to call Christian theology, was static in his opinion. In a period when the scientific control of nature proved to be the one aim of knowledge, Keble taught emphatically that the only knowledge really worth acquiring was knowing the practical value of the truths revealed to man by God. This kind of knowledge could never be attained by speculative theorizing, but only by applying the revealed truths in everyday life and learning to appreciate their value by practical experience. He endeavoured to rouse his contemporaries from their preoccupation with knowledge for its own sake or with knowledge as a means to a material end. He took every care to prevent men from becoming blind to their first object in life, the saving of their souls and their eternal happiness. He tried to make them see that the overestimation of natural science and the application of the scientific way of thinking to the things of God were to be held chiefly responsible for the loss of what he used to call 'the fundamental principle of natural piety', that 'things are such because God made and keeps them such' ¹⁹). He warned people that, because they occupied themselves entirely with the transformation of nature, they ran the risk of forgetting that it was their life-task to let themselves be transformed by God's grace, in which natural objects might be of assistance to them because God had expressly created them for that purpose. However, success in science had made man 'overweening and irreligious', and 'in a tone of self-complacency men praise their time and one another for the great and rapidly increasing proficiency of the two or three last generations in their knowledge and command of the powers of na-

¹⁹) KEBLE, *Tract 89*, p. 137.

ture' ²⁰). The right understanding of 'reality' would make men see that not natural religion, but the Bible and Tradition were the only sources of all religious truth. Naturally, religious thinking would be continually faced with new problems, but, Keble believed, the solution of these problems would always consist in showing that their novelty was only apparent. It would appear that the answers were already contained in Tradition, because Tradition represented the collective experiences of many generations of faithful Christians. The only task of theological thinking was to him the rediscovery of and comment upon forgotten but traditional truths.

He pointed out that the rationalistic theory of acquiring knowledge about reality was not an advance but a regression on the way leading to the true interpretation of human nature. The great mistake in it was that it took man for its starting-point. Rationalists took it for granted that there were in man's mind innate ideas from which they could proceed to deduce a general metaphysical system of reality. They limited their view to external natural objects, and ignored or denied the existence of things transcending direct natural experience. In a word, they denied the mystic quality in human nature which made man capable of a spiritual apprehension of truths lying beyond the understanding. The result was an impoverishment and a narrowing of the content of the term 'reality'. If, on the other hand, Keble argued, man did not take himself as the starting-point of his theory, but started from the existence of an infinite Being continuously present in material reality and symbolically represented by it, a Being on whom man felt dependent for his existence, this would mean an extension and an enrichment of the content of the term 'reality'. It would mean the return to a unified interpretation of nature both in its material and in its immaterial aspects; it would mean man's return to his union with Christ, which was after all his only purpose in life.

Keble thought that this change in the attitude towards reality could only be brought about by making men familiar with the way of thinking of the Primitive Church. This implied the 'habit of considering the material world either as fraught with imaginative associations, or as parabolical lessons of conduct, or as a symbolical language in which God speaks to us of a world out of sight' ²¹). The early Fathers based their outlook on life on the idea that all created things should be interpreted

²⁰) KEBLE, *Tract 89*, p. 137.

²¹) *id.*, pp. 142, 143.

and utilized in their functional qualities of directing man's attention to God. The contrast between their attitude and the scientific utilization of nature in the nineteenth century was indeed great. Keble typified it by pointing out that whereas in modern literature, education and theology 'a very large part is occupied by instruction and research on physical subjects', the Fathers held totally different views on all the great divisions of human knowledge. This was nowhere more strongly marked, he thought, than in those branches of knowledge which are related to the study of nature and the aspects of the external world. With great care they excluded scientific and physical views because 'they wanted to prevent our acquiescing in that kind of knowledge as though in itself it were any great thing. They showed that such knowledge was but very remotely connected with the proper duty and happiness of mankind' ²²). In support of his point of view, Keble quoted St. Augustine, St. Ambrose and especially St. Irenaeus. The latter denounced the very attempt to know everything and scorned the very dreaming of the possibility of such a thing as a sign of impiety. Adapting this attitude to the conditions of the nineteenth century, Keble contended that it was impossible for man to attain practical — that is operative as distinguished from scientific — truth by means of his speculative reason only.

To smooth the way for a return to the conception of reality as expounded by the early Fathers, a return which was for obvious reasons anything but attractive in a period of progress, Keble reminded his contemporaries that such ideas about nature and the attainment of the truth were by no means limited to primitive times only, but that much more recently there were authoritative persons who took up a position similar to that of the Fathers without being influenced by them. Men like Bishop Butler and Wordsworth attributed equal importance to the sense of mystery and the symbolic interpretation of natural reality.

Butler had understood that "the mind of the learner being as it were shrunk and narrowed within the compass of mere daily life, it is through the business of daily life, by familiar illustrations and arguments of analogy that a wise teacher will endeavour to introduce whatever knowledge of a higher and more abstract kind is really desirable" ²³). In his *Analogy*, he had appealed to one of the most natural qualities in man, his fondness of types and parables, his natural disposition to regard everything visible as a symbol of something invisible. That it was indeed

²²) KEBLE, *Tract 89*, pp. 137, 138.

²³) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. i, pp. 18, 19.

a natural quality was brought out by the fact that it is 'often most developed in those who have least means of acquiring literal [as opposed to mystical, allegorical or metaphorical] instruction' ²⁴). It was exactly this particular 'habit of thought' which made simple people more apt to receive the Bible than those of greater learning. Christ Himself had said that the Gospel was to be preached to the poor in station as well as in spirit. To Keble this was sufficient proof that analogous or symbolic thinking stood on a religious basis ²⁵).

Butler maintained that all knowledge about God and religion has necessarily to remain analogical knowledge. It can but result in probability, never in scientific certainty. In reply to the question as to how knowledge about God is to be attained, he had said that the most reasonable attitude of man towards the infinite wisdom and mysteriousness of God is to accept facts as they come, without being intellectually critical, without asking too much why things should be as they are. It was Butler's constantly repeated advice to observe nature and listen passively to Revelation, to collect facts from daily experience and act upon them in accordance with the truths revealed by God ²⁶).

The rise of the new kind of poetry was another proof that the imaginative sense was still alive. Though perhaps slow in being generally accepted because of its specifically religious associations, the ultimate success of the new poetry showed that people still required something that could stir their imagination.

Wordsworth had formulated his views of the attainment of knowledge about reality in the preface to the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*. Although it is fairly long, the relevant passage is worth quoting here. "Our continued influxes of feeling", he wrote, "are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings; and, as by contemplating the relation of these general representatives to each other, we discover what is really important to men, so, by the repetition and continuance of this act, our feelings will be connected with important subjects till at length . . . such habits of mind will be produced, that, by obeying blindly and mechanically the impulse of those habits, we shall describe objects and utter sentiments of such nature and such connexion with each other, that the understanding of

²⁴) KEBLE, *Tract 89*, p. 136.

²⁵) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, Preface, p. xiii.

²⁶) BUTLER, *Analogy*, ed. W. E. Gladstone, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1897, Part i, ch. vii, § 6; Part ii, ch. iii *passim*.

the reader must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, and his affections strengthened and purified" 27).

The whole personality of man is stirred in his imagination, and a 'habit of mind' is formed which may be obeyed 'blindly and mechanically'. This was exactly the change of mentality, or rather the change of heart, which Keble thought indispensable for a religious revival in which sacramental grace might again be accepted as the one means of uniting man to God. The appreciation of the importance of the imaginative sense might bring with it the cure of the prevailing apathy in religious matters 28). Thus religion might again become as efficacious a practice as it had been during the first centuries of the Church Universal. The great value of authors like Butler and Wordsworth was that they made people see that feelings of mystery and awe, springing from the imaginative sense, could not but be quite congenial to human nature. By making his contemporaries familiar with the ideas of these authors, Keble hoped to assist them in casting off their prejudices against the early Fathers.

Keble thought the theories of Butler and Wordsworth so suitable for preparing a return to the way of thinking of the Fathers, because their common basis was conformable to the principle underlying the Fathers' symbolic apprehension of reality. Butler as well as Wordsworth and the Fathers started from the assumption that experience is far more important and decisive in the attainment of operative truth than mere inquiry. Keble neglected the fact that the content of the term experience must have been different for Butler from what it was for Wordsworth. He took it in the Wordsworthian sense, namely as a practical acquaintance with the external world resulting from the *feelings* roused by this world, not as a practical acquaintance resulting from the *observation* of the world. Wordsworth had taught him that thoughts are the 'representatives of past feelings', and that the contemplation of the relation between these representatives may lead to knowledge about important subjects. Even more outstanding, however, was Wordsworth's teaching that human sentiments and natural objects are connected with each

27) WORDSWORTH, *Preface, Lyrical Ballads*, 2nd ed., English Critical Essays, 19th century, World's Classics, pp. 5, 6.

28) It may be interesting to insert here for comparison what NEWMAN said later on about imagination in his *Grammar of Assent*. "It is not imagination that causes action, but hope and fear, likes and dislikes, appetite, passion, affection, the stirrings of selfishness and self-love. Imagination finds for us a means of stimulating the motive powers, and it does so by providing a supply of objects strong enough to stimulate them". Longmans, 1913, p. 82.

other, and that it is this connection which tends to enlighten man's understanding and to strengthen and purify his affections. By insisting upon this connection, Wordsworth had brought material reality to life again, and he had pointed out the way to the attainment of operative truth, truth stimulating a person to act in accordance with it. His theory and poetic practice might help to refute the scientific apprehension of reality.

Keble considered Butler's theory as a complement of Wordsworth's ideas. Butler had started from the fact that God is the author of the external and of the spiritual world. He may therefore be expected to act in each world according to similar laws. Consequently, Butler had taught that 'knowledge of a higher and more abstract kind' could be attained by applying the experience of the external world analogically to the spiritual world.

The early romantic theory had represented man as an isolated being in an unrelated world. It was the task of the poet to bridge the gulf between the two by means of the imagination. Butler had confronted man with the material and the spiritual world. By means of analogy man's experience of the material world could be made into a useful instrument to acquire knowledge about God and the spiritual world. Moral truths could be realized by the association of ideas. Keble's starting-point was that there could not be a gulf between man and the world, because both man and the world had been created by God to His honour. God had enabled man to penetrate into the spiritual world beyond the external world by means of his moral instinct. Real knowledge was the result of man's instinctive reaction to and participation in material reality as a living symbol. Keble based this symbolic interpretation of reality on man's innate ethical interests, on his feelings of love and fear of God. These feelings not only actuated his reasoning power, they also 'strengthened and purified' his affections.

For a return to the way of thinking of the Primitive Church it was also necessary, however, that people should become acquainted with the writings of the Fathers, for there the authentic synthesis of their sacramental interpretation of life and nature was to be found. In order to enable his contemporaries to investigate the sources for themselves, Keble stimulated the publication of the *Library of the Fathers*. His *Tract 89* was intended as a kind of elucidative introduction to it. He wanted to show that the way of thinking of the Primitive Church, in which the whole scheme of material things assumed a symbolical character, was a true representation of the 'Mind of Jesus Christ Himself', communicated

to His Mystical Body by the mysterious inspiration of the Holy Ghost. As it was of primary importance that the authority of the Fathers was strengthened, Keble tried to collect convincing arguments, demonstrating that the mysticism of the Fathers formed an essential part of the very apostolical system which was grounded on Scripture itself. These arguments were to lead up to the conclusion that the material world was originally created by God with a view to sacred analogies and mystical interpretations²⁹). In this way he hoped people might be made to understand that the scientific approach to nature was a hindrance to religion and had to be replaced by the sacramental or mystical approach.

The first point Keble adduced in defence of the authority of the Fathers was their use of 'scriptural imagery'. In Scripture, he said, there are many expressions which show that supernatural truths are often represented by visible objects. Such natural objects were therefore used as mystical images by Christ Himself. If Christ had used but one such image, Keble thought, it would already have been a sufficient sanction from God for our natural tendency to express invisible things by means of the things we can see. "We may without irreverence begin to speculate on other possible associations and mysterious meanings"³⁰). As an example Keble takes the word 'true' as it was used by Christ in combinations like 'the true vine', 'the true light'. Evidently, the word was used to refer to something beyond its usual meaning. It implied the substance in contrast to the shadow, and he thought it might therefore be rendered in modern usage by the word 'real'. It denoted that the natural objects qualified by it were intended to be tokens from God 'to assure us of some spiritual fact or other which is of the greatest importance to us'. The objects 'fulfilled half at least of the nature of Sacraments: they were pledges to assure us of some spiritual thing, even though they were no means to convey it to us. They were in a very sufficient sense *Verba Visibilia*'³¹). The poetic or imaginative sense was created in man to respond to this divine intention, and, Keble concluded, it appeared from Scripture that the mystical use of external things was intended by God from the beginning of Creation.

Keble's second point in his defence of the Fathers' reliability is their striking agreement in attaching similar symbolical meanings to the respective material objects. His studies of the patristic writers had led

²⁹) KEBLE, *Tract 89*, p. 173.

³⁰) id., pp. 167, 168.

³¹) id., p. 148.

him to the conclusion that they agreed in the following rule of interpretation: "The types and figures which the New Testament expressly notices out of the Old are but a few out of many. They are specimens or ensamples according to which the Holy Ghost wants us to regard the whole of the former dispensation" ³²). Their system of interpretation cannot possibly be supposed to have sprung from personal poetical associations, for "it is highly improbable", Keble argued, "that so many writers of various times, nations and characters, living in such different circumstances, should either light upon the same set of figures independently of each other, or should coincide in imitating any one who had gone before them without any special authority. The whole of their imagery cannot be regarded as a matter of taste, for many of the symbols are far from possessing at first sight that exquisite poetical fitness which would be required, if it were a matter of taste" ³³). Keble's conclusion was that apparently they had a common source and were guided in their selection by something deeper than imaginative delight in the beauty of nature or in the exercise of their personal ingenuity. This common source must have been the interpretation generally given to the Bible in apostolical times. The Scriptures were first delivered to the Fathers, so that they could easily avail themselves of the many opportunities to consult the inspired writers themselves or persons who had been in close contact with them.

A third point in favour of the Fathers' authority is that their mysticism is evidently confined within definite limits. They never lost sight of the letter of the text, and always preserved historical and literal truths. Their veneration of the Holy Book was too great not to guard it against any tendency of 'over-refinement or affected spirituality'. Keble saw in their mysticism a sign of their respectful economic reserve, for it was especially in their controversies and important arguments with unbelievers that their mystical interpretation proved to be of the greatest value. Their symbols did not convey more knowledge than the rule of the Church allowed to those people who were outside the pale of the Church, whereas to the baptized these same symbols conveyed 'intimations deep and solemn in proportion to the depth of their faith' ³⁴).

The mystical sphere of thought of the Fathers was the outgrowth of their vivid sense of God's continuous presence and constant interference.

³²) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, Postscript to s. viii, pp. 359 ff.

³³) KEBLE, *Tract 89*, p. 146.

³⁴) *id.*, pp. 31, 32.

God's works and words meant much more to them than can be perceived from the outside. Being divine, they could not but have eternal and infinite associations. This was, according to Keble, the reason why the Fathers passed so easily from one branch of symbolism to another, from allegorizing the words of God to spiritualizing His works ³⁵). Their minds were so full of the Scriptures that it was but one step for them to apply the same mystical associations in daily life. "A window being once opened for the lamps lighted within the Church to stream here and there upon the external world, it was rendered easy for a devout and contemplative mind to invent and pursue like trains of thought in other instances less expressly warranted in Scripture" ³⁶). They considered everything capable of becoming a means of grace, a token manifesting God's presence and favour. They became accustomed to dedicate and sacrifice to God all the things, the actions and periods of their daily life, and connected them with spiritual associations. Things which were to others merely natural objects were to them sacramental symbols. Without any scruple they gave the name of sacrament to all the material objects which were used in the service of the Church.

Keble expressly declared that it was certainly not his intention to claim infallibility for all the details of any patristic commentary. In their application of the rule of interpretation, the Fathers were undoubtedly left to their personal, fallible judgment, so that there was admittedly a human and a divine mysticism in their writings. Whether we are able to draw the exact line between the two was another matter. At any rate, he did not think it a sufficient reason to prevent Christians from profiting by the imagery of the Fathers in their way of considering the material world ³⁷). If the Fathers descended so easily from the highest forms of divine mysticism to purely imaginative associations in daily life, it might be possible for ordinary Christians to rise from the lowest, most human stage of interpretation to a more spiritual attitude towards natural objects. This was exactly what Keble hopefully expected from the moral and poetical influences of authors like Butler and Wordsworth.

Keble distinguished three levels in the Fathers' symbolic interpretation of nature.

The lowest level is the *poetical* interpretation, which he called 'the natural groundwork or rudiment' of the following two. This 'thinking in

³⁵) KEBLE, *Tract 89*, p. 29.

³⁶) *id.*, p. 29.

³⁷) *id.*, p. 145.

images' is instinctive, and as such it is to be considered much more primitively natural than abstract thinking. In the former the whole personality of man is involved in his reaction on and in his relation to his surroundings. In the latter the feelings and emotions, which are the most essential constituents of human nature, are purposely eliminated in order to arrive at a so-called objective conclusion.

The second level, an improvement of the imaginative use of the material world, is the *moral* interpretation of nature which looks for guidance in human life and conduct. This is the use that thinking men make of nature 'according to the best of their own judgment, antecedent to or apart from any revealed information on the subject'. Both poetical and moral analogies can be discovered by everybody, even by uneducated persons, because such analogies supply an instinctive human need. Keble was convinced that it was the devil himself that had caused these faculties to decay in man. "The Evil one wants us to keep our eyes downwards . . . Nobody can be at a loss which way the Evil one prevails most: by erroneous modes of realizing things out of sight, or by gradually lowering our notions of them, until we have come to scorn or disregard everything that is not in sight" ³⁸).

The third level is the *mystical*, the Christian or theological use which the Fathers made of the external world. On this level the symbolical interpretation is reduced to a set of symbols and associations which has more or less explicitly the authority and sanction of God Himself ³⁹).

Keble adduced the following sacramental symbols as the chief examples of the many others belonging to this set.

The Church is first among the symbols which are invested with God's divine associations and meanings. Keble calls the Church the chief and central sacrament, because it is Christ's Mystical Body. The great mystery of the unity of Christ with His Church lies in the fact that Christ Himself still acts personally in the sacramental symbols. "Within the Church, i.e. in Christ, all is true and real; without the Church, i.e. without Christ, all is either false and empty, or at best shadowy, imperfect and unsatisfactory" ⁴⁰). To bring home to Anglican Churchmen the idea that there are always two aspects to the means adopted by God in His communication with man, Keble thought the Church Establishment a good illustration of this fact. With its earthly and its divine side the Established Church was, in his opinion, a large experiment, realizing and bringing

³⁸) KEBLE, *On Eucharistical Adoration*, 3rd ed. Oxford 1867, p. 247.

³⁹) On the three levels of interpretation see KEBLE, *Tract 89*, pp. 143 ff.

⁴⁰) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. vi, s. xxxv, p. 399.

home to people the earthly and practical value of the divine ordinances ⁴¹⁾).

The Bible is another outward, visible sign, a kind of sacrament, of the presence of God. "Before we have our inward eyes opened by the all-powerful grace of the Holy Spirit, there is nothing in Scripture but good reading". To those who have the faith to see it, Christ is present from beginning to end, both in the Old and in the New Testament. "The Personal Word is everywhere in the written word, could we but discern Him" ⁴²⁾).

The Sacraments, in the strict sense of the word, are the summits of religion. They are not mere figurative symbols, but really effective means of conveying God's grace to man. Christ Himself is the chief minister of each Sacrament. The efficacy of the Sacraments springs directly from God's power and is entirely independent of human agency. Through the Sacraments God Himself effects a change in the soul of the recipient, and in each Sacrament He unites the recipient to Him and His Mystical Body in a special way. Comparing the Sacraments with faith, prayer and good works, Keble said, "Do we, in our reverence for the Sacraments, make void either prayer, or faith, or good works? No, in no wise; we establish them all: we consider prayer, faith and obedience as so many exercises of grace already given, to prepare us for more and higher grace to be continually given. Prayer, faith, obedience, in the Church's account, are conditions to the best end, communion with Christ; but the Sacraments are for the time being the very end itself" ⁴³⁾).

Church ritual was, in Keble's opinion, such a natural consequence of the Fathers' mystical interpretation of all nature, that he preferred to regard liturgical ceremonies as authorized, perhaps even divinely authorized portions of the perpetual spiritual sacrifice of the Church. In the course of time, he supposed, the Church had selected a certain number of actions of the body, such as bowing, kneeling, turning to the east, and certain forms of matter, such as the cross, the ring and others, and had gradually combined them into an orderly system, offering to God so many specimens of everything that was made by Him. Although Keble admitted that his view of the origin of Church ceremonies was a personal one, nowhere expressly set down by the Fathers or any of their successors, he was sure of the fact that the liturgy meant less and less to a great many Anglicans because of the general weakening of their sym-

⁴¹⁾ KEBLE, Synod of Exeter, *Occ. Papers & Reviews*, p. 257.

⁴²⁾ *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. i, s. xxxi, pp. 311-317.

⁴³⁾ *id.*, vol. v, s. xiii, p. 152.

bolic sense. In the services in his own parish church Keble was very prudent as regards ritual matters, but his advice was always that all ceremonies which still remained in the Anglican Church should 'be cherished as something more than merely decent and venerable usages' ⁴⁴).

The ministry was also a sacrament in the wider sense of the word. Before Christ came, priests were 'mere shadows'. However, now that He has come, they are His 'very images', denoting a special presence of the reality which is Christ Himself. In the priest Christ is not present in His whole being, but only in His divine nature. The ministry is 'a token and the mean' of the continuance of the indwelling Spirit in the people of God ⁴⁵).

In the wider sense of the term, the moral sense is also a sacrament, a mysterious token of God's presence, when through the working of baptismal grace man's 'common sense' has been changed into the 'moral sense'.

In the widest sense of the word, man's symbolical sense is sacramental, because it enables him to regard all nature as a mystical manifestation of God's presence. The Holy Spirit, dwelling in the heart of the faithful Christian, is the source of all poetic inspiration. Viewed in this light, poetry may be called a sacrament. "The vehicle chosen for the most direct divine communication has always been that form of speech which most readily adopts and invites poetical or symbolical imagery" ⁴⁶). Poetry has been 'the ordained vehicle of revelation, until God Himself was made manifest in the flesh' ⁴⁷).

It is evident that Keble was fond of using the term 'sacrament' in the general, more comprehensive sense in which the patristic writers used to apply it. He meant by it the material manifestation of God's presence and the means of participation in Him. He liked to speak of 'God's own Poetry'. In a lengthy passage in *Tract 89*, worded with characteristic reserve and hesitation, he worked out this favourite idea of his which is, as it were, the very keystone of his outlook on life. "If we suppose Poetry in general to mean the expression of an overflowing mind, relieving itself more or less indirectly and reservedly of the thoughts and passions which most oppress it, on which hypothesis each person will have a Poetry of his own, a set of associations appropriate to himself for the works of

⁴⁴) KEBLE, Preface to the edition of Hooker's *Works*, pp. lxxxviii-lxxxix.

⁴⁵) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. vii, s. xxxiv, p. 326.

⁴⁶) KEBLE, *Tract 89*, p. 165.

⁴⁷) *id.*, p. 185; cf. Ch. IV of this essay.

nature and other visible objects in themselves common to him with others, — if this be so, what follows will not perhaps be thought altogether an unwarrantable conjecture; proposed, as it ought, and is wished to be, with all fear and religious reverence: may it not be so, that our Lord, in union and communion with all His members, is represented to us as constituting, in a certain sense, one great and manifold Person, into which, by degrees, all souls of men, who do not cast themselves away, are to be absorbed? and as it is a scriptural and ecclesiastical way of speaking, to say Christ suffers in our flesh, is put to shame in our sins, our members are part of Him; so may it not be affirmed, that He in like manner condescends to have a Poetry of His own, a set of holy and divine associations and meanings, wherewith it is His will to invest all material things? And the authentic records of His will in this, as in all other truths supernatural, are, of course, Holy Scripture and the consent of ecclesiastical writers”⁴⁸).

Keble did not overlook the danger that such a symbolic view of nature could easily be misconstrued and become an occasion for many aberrations. In one of his sermons he warned his parishioners, saying, “The heathens, in all ages, carried this feeling after signs very far, inventing all manners of omens, tokens and divinations. It requires a deep and ever-present sense of the one, true God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, else it becomes what is called superstition, trusting to invisible creatures instead of God Almighty, and we have need to be very much on our guard against it. But if we try to walk with God always and to have Him in all our thoughts, then, as He is sure to vouchsafe us tokens sufficient to guide us in our duty and point out to us the next thing to be done, so it cannot be wrong in us humbly to look out and watch for such signs”⁴⁹). Again, in his *Studia Sacra*, a collection of theological papers which contains among other things a commentary on the introductory verses of the Gospel of St. John, Keble adduced the first four verses of this Gospel as a scriptural argument refuting any identification of the patristic idea of the presence of Christ with what he contemptuously called ‘that strange mixture of Christianity and Pantheism which plays the part of philosophy in nineteenth century England and elsewhere’. His interpretation of the verses runs, “The first two verses . . . expressly declare a personal God against any Spinozist imagination of an Anima Mundi. The third is authoritative to put down any atomic or Darwinian

⁴⁸) KEBLE, *Tract 89*, p. 144.

⁴⁹) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. i, s. xxiii, pp. 239, 240.

theory, which would make God's creatures the result of I know not what inherent appurtenances or tendencies, developing themselves for an unlimited time. Life, according to verse four, instead of being a necessary function of bodies organized in a particular way — a 'wave', so to speak, of certain material fluids, is a gift directly communicated from the Most High" ⁵⁰).

Keble let no opportunity pass unused to teach his complacent and self-willed contemporaries that nothing could be done or take place in the universe, that no motion or act of any creature, visible or invisible, could be performed but for Christ's presence. For everything man possessed or knew or was able to do, he was entirely dependent on God, because the Incarnate God is the source of all life and light. A passage from his *Studia Sacra* may be quoted here to illustrate this idea. "The secret Presence of the Word and His communication of Himself has been the principle of Life to all that have lived, so, whatever real Light the children of men have at any time enjoyed, or in any measure, it has been wholly due to this same divine Presence: — a spark as it were of the vital fire mysteriously abiding within them, struck out by His providential working according to the counsel of His own will. The Light of mankind has been, is, and ever will be, the Manifestation of the Life within them of the Living and Life-giving Word" ⁵¹).

Christ's Incarnation and its effect upon human nature is, as is to be expected, a theme regularly returning in Keble's sermons. Again and again he endeavoured to make his audience understand and feel the purport of this mysterious event and what exactly the change was that was brought about by it. In one sermon he called the Incarnation 'the means as well as the token, so the entire sacrament, of the redemption of our nature' ⁵²). In another he worked out the point that "Christ's life and His miracles are promises of the great miracles to come, namely the Sacraments. Since the burial of Christ the whole earth has been the place where He lay for a time, and His mark is on all material things" ⁵³). In everything it was Keble's chief aim to bring the 'living Christ that is still present' nearer to his fellow-Churchmen. If they were to realize that they were actual members of Christ, mystically yet really united to Him, partakers through Him of His divine nature ⁵⁴), the sacramental sense

⁵⁰) KEBLE, *Studia Sacra*, pp. 24, 25.

⁵¹) id., p. 20.

⁵²) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. ii, s. vi, p. 64.

⁵³) id., vol. ix, s. xlv, p. 530.

⁵⁴) id., vol. vii, s. xii, pp. 112, 113.

was indispensable. This sense is itself a gift of God, for grace is the one condition for the right approach to nature. It is grace given in Baptism that makes it possible for a Christian to realize the harmonious unity originally designed by God and afterwards disturbed by sin. Grace is the intimate, personal relationship between God and man, by which man's being is changed, not merely ethically or psychologically, but ontologically. Grace changes man's 'common sense' into the 'moral sense', it changes his 'symbolical sense' into the 'mystical sense', enabling him to arrive at a reliable moral and sacramental interpretation of his material surroundings. Indeed, outwardly the world remains exactly the same to men as it would be if they were not Christians, but through faith they know that there is a meaning and power in all common things ⁵⁵). Only the faithful are privileged to see the direct hand of God in every process of nature. They are able to recognize that 'all that here seems bright and desirable has in heaven something to answer it, only infinitely brighter and more desirable than it. As a picture stands for the living man, and the shadow for the substance, so what we admire and love here stands for something there to be truly admired and loved' ⁵⁶).

The symbolic view of nature, centring round the constant recollection of Christ's presence in the world, may justly be called Keble's seminal principle and the source of all his contributions to the Oxford Movement. It was his firm conviction that it was the only remedy against the worldly unbelieving spirit of the age. He thought it the greatest service he could do his Church to bring this out.

It will now be possible to give a fairly complete summary of Keble's vision of the world and of man's position in it.

When God created the world, He made the natural an image of the supernatural. He gave man the faculties necessary to utilize material reality and interpret it so as to employ it as his guide to God and his eternal happiness. These faculties may be called his 'common sense' and his 'poetical sense'. Sin, however, disturbed this harmonious unity, and the world became a mere shadow of the supernatural. When Christ became Man, all nature was changed again from a shadow into a real image or sacramental symbol of the divine. Christ's Incarnation is therefore the source of all religious analogy. It enables man again to regard and employ all created things with a view to directing his attention and devotion to God. All nature has again become a sacramental symbol of

⁵⁵) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. vii, s. xviii, p. 175.

⁵⁶) *id.*, vol. viii, s. xxvi, pp. 278, 279.

God's permanent presence in the world. So man need no longer be in doubt about his correct attitude towards the world. He should not love the world for its own sake because that would be contrary to the love of God. Nor should he hate all created things. The only correct attitude towards them is to value them and employ them as stepping-stones to the supernatural realities. Symbolic thinking and a faithful heart will show man that 'the Almighty God has so filled the world with tokens of Himself, that it seems as if He would not permit us quite to forget Him, do what we will' ⁵⁷). From this we may conclude that God wants to get into contact with man through symbols, and that, normally, saving grace is not conferred in a direct way by means of abstract, divine instruction and exhortation.

Various aspects are distinguishable in the symbol ⁵⁸). In the first place, it belongs to the essence of a symbol that it derives its special character from the communicative attitude of the person who selects and applies a certain material object as a symbol. The symbol therefore represents at once the thing symbolized and the inner attitude of the subject who selected it. Thus sacramental symbols manifest God's presence and they represent His loving care and grace. In the second place, it is characteristic of the symbol that it communicates and invites at the same time. When a natural object used as a symbol is placed before man, it addresses itself to all the psychic faculties of his personality, his understanding, feeling and will. In his confrontation with the symbol man cannot possibly remain neutral or indifferent towards the object. His interest is roused in what the object symbolizes and in the attitude of the person who applied it as a symbol. He opens himself to the symbol and reacts upon it. Symbolic thinking is therefore that psychic activity which approaches material reality imaginatively and penetrates *via* symbols to those inner realities of the natural phenomena which are not empirically verifiable, namely the things symbolized and the communicative attitude of the person who selected the objects as symbols. This is the only way of thinking that is directed towards adequate knowledge about reality. This knowledge is a spiritual experience of that which is knowable in the symbolic object. It attains to participation in what God has symbolized in nature, especially in the grace conferred by means of the Sacraments in the strict sense of the term.

⁵⁷) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. iii, s. iv, p. 41. cf. KEBLE, *Sacred Poetry*, reprinted in *Occ. Papers & Reviews*, p. 91.

⁵⁸) For the wording of the following passage I am mainly indebted to Dr. J. A. PONSIOEN, *Symboliek in de samenleving*, Utrecht 1952.

Here lies the fundamental reason why Keble so strongly objected to the application of the scientific way of thinking to religious matters. In the empirical way of thinking of the rationalist, the object plays such an important part that it absorbs all his attention. He is so completely taken up with the observation of the outward appearances of things and their utility, that he neglects the invisible entities revealed in them. All that may be symbolically signified by them does not penetrate his consciousness. He has no eye for the world of spiritual realities and their values. Consequently, he lacks interest in what is symbolized in the object and he does not participate in the life of the person who reveals his thoughts and feelings symbolically. He is not stimulated to take an active part in it. In a word, he lives at a distance from actual reality, confined as he is within the narrow limits of his abstract thinking. The notions or propositions with which he works are lifeless pieces cut out of reality. The results of this crippled way of thinking were not difficult to find, Keble thought, in the mentality of his age. Technics and utilitarianism predominated. Respectability and hypocrisy had taken the place of morals. There was a growing indifference as to faith and religious belief. Because of their lack of the symbolic sense, rationalists could not be really believing men. They could not but be destitute of God's grace. As long as they ignored the function of sacramental symbols in uniting man with God, they could not participate in what God had symbolized in His Sacraments. Their only remedy lay in a return to the symbolic conception of nature which is the foundation of the way of thinking of the Ancient Church as it is set forth in the writings of the early Fathers. For this return Bishop Butler and Wordsworth could no doubt smooth the way.

CHAPTER VI

THE SACRAMENTS

Keble saw clearly, that in all the controversies which had troubled the Church of England ever since the Reformation, the essential point at issue had always been whether the reformed Anglican Church was a creation of the human mind or a supernatural body, Christ's Mystical Body, the 'sure token of His wonderful Presence among men' ¹). The great question had always been to determine to which of the two systems in the world of religion, diametrically opposed to each other, she belonged, to the one 'grounded in faith', which he called Catholicism, or to the one 'grounded in self-will', which he called 'Protestantism'. For him, there was not the slightest doubt that the Church of England, connected as she was with the Primitive Church through Apostolic Succession, could lay claim to being a branch of the Catholic or Universal Church. He was convinced that, in spite of all the 'protestantizing' influences that had made themselves felt in the course of the centuries, the English Church had always remained 'the repetition of Christ's Incarnation, Life, Sacrifice, Death and Resurrection; the repetition of the sending of the Coequal Spirit to regenerate us one by one, to unite us to Himself, to dwell in us, to make us partakers of the Divine Nature' ²). In the Church of England, Keble maintained, 'all this is repeated, in virtue and effect, to each person whom by His Sacraments Christ has made and continued a member of that Church. In her the fountains of Christ's sacramental grace shower down blessings upon us to sanctify us. In her the Bible, the Sacraments and the Ministers are the great helps given us by God to know His blessed will and to remain united with Christ' ³).

If in the nineteenth century the Church of England was less and less able to respond to the spiritual needs of the human heart, it was, Keble thought, because she had allowed Liberalism and Rationalism to weaken the sense of the reality of the connection between nature and the supernatural. Under the narrowing influences of their views of life, she

¹) KEBLE, *On Eucharistical Adoration*, Preface to the 2nd ed. 1859, p. xiv.

²) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. i, serm. xix, p. 204.

³) *id.*, p. 204.

seemed to have lost sight of the only purpose in life, which is communion with Christ. She seemed to consider it sufficient that her members believed in this communion, whereas it was clearly God's intention that this communion with Him was to be experienced in increasing strength.

Keble considered it his task to show that it is only possible for man to experience this growth if he avails himself of every help and all the means which God has set at his disposal to attain this end. Only on that condition can man hope to come into contact with the whole of Revelation, the manifestation of God in all its aspects. Rationalism had attempted to limit man's contact with God to a rational theorizing about God. The Reformation had reduced Revelation to the Bible, disregarding Tradition. It was but natural, Keble said, that those who are 'left alone with their Bibles' should 'use their supposed liberty of interpretation first in explaining away the mysterious meaning, and afterwards in lowering or evading the supernatural authority of the Scriptures. Tradition has always been a warning against the irreverent use of reason, because man is continuously exposed to the danger of treating as profane what may be sacred, though not as yet proved to be so, the danger of slighting divine mysteries, because we cannot comprehend or explain them' ⁴). Liberalism had foisted a wrong conception of liberty upon people, suggesting that they were free to follow that which pleased their own judgment best, so that they 'could do without Church ordinances, provided they seem to themselves to have good thoughts and to behave well' ⁵). Thus the real meaning of Christian liberty had been lost, namely 'that people are free from the law of sin and death through the Holy Gospel, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus; that of their own accord they choose the things which God chooses, approve what He approves, and do what He commands; that their minds and hearts fully consent to the motions of the Holy Spirit' ⁶).

Over against all these misleading limitations of man's contact with God, Keble placed his advice that people should 'shrink from all attempts to disparage the Old Testament under the pretence of exalting the New, or the Sacraments in order to magnify the Word, or the example of the Church and the Saints of old, on the ground of each person being the best judge of what edifies him' ⁷).

The evident result of all these liberal ideas was, in Keble's opinion,

⁴) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, Postscript to s. viii, pp. 358-359.

⁵) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. iv, s. xxxv, p. 353.

⁶) *id.*, p. 353.

⁷) KEBLE, *Studia Sacra*, p. 109.

that man had lost his bearings and looked for his happiness in the wrong direction. His innate longing for order and harmony remained unsatisfied, a longing which Keble diagnosed as the chief cause of the prevalent disease. It made him speak of the 'healing function' of poetry⁸). As a substitute for religion, the new kind of poetry responded to the great and instinctive necessity of human nature, the longing for some object of desire or regret, the thirst for absolute happiness. In one of his *Lectures on Poetry* he said, "I apprehend that . . . there may be found even nowadays men of primitive and simple virtue who regard all that is implied by 'writing in verse' with small favour: as being touched with worldly stain and closely associated (so they fancy) with luxury and effeminacy. Such men should, I think, be warned not to insist that medicine should be rejected by the sick, just because the whole have no need of it"⁹).

By drawing up an analogy between poetry and religion Keble had tried to adapt his views of sacramental grace to unbelieving detractors of the function of religion. For believers, God's miraculous healing touch in the Bible was a sufficiently clear image of His sacramental grace. They believed that Christ touched them spiritually but really in the Sacraments in order to heal their souls. The new poetry might be a prelude to a renewed belief in the mysterious presence of Christ and in His communication of Himself as the 'principle of life and light'. Nature could provide the excited soul with many associations appealing to the imagination, and so poetry with its symbolism could help people to penetrate into regions where God's presence is perceptible. It might thus cause an intense longing for real communion with Him and look for means to give expression to that longing.

In every religious experience, but especially in the Sacrament, Keble distinguished a double element, the self-sacrifice or dedication to God and the intention to receive a favour from Him. Hence the twofold aspect of religious symbols, namely the devotional or dedicatory aspect, for instance prayer, and on the other hand the holy tokens representing and realizing the favour bestowed on man in answer to his self-sacrifice¹⁰). As will appear later on, Keble worked this out most clearly when dealing with the Holy Eucharist. In a period which was characterized by the predominance of abstract or scientific thinking, he

⁸) The title of his *Lectures on Poetry* is *De Poeticae Vi medica*.

⁹) KEBLE, *Lectures on Poetry*, vol. ii, lect. xxx, p. 271.

¹⁰) cf. J. A. PONSIOEN, *Symboliek in de samenleving*, Utrecht 1952, p. 212.

advocated the symbolic approach to nature because of the participative element it contained. Scientific thinking kept man at a distance from the object he contemplated. Consequently, God was only regarded in His abstract nature. Symbolic thinking guided man to the consciousness of God's presence in nature, disposing him to that personal sanctification without which religious convictions cannot have any practical or operative value. This way of thinking enabled man to understand that God has given His Sacraments to unite us really and spiritually to Himself, to make and keep us members of His Body and children of His Father by real inward sanctifying grace¹¹). Religion was to Keble an encounter with God, a psychic occurrence through which two personalities, God and man, touch each other inwardly and in the most intimate and complete way. In this encounter the totally different second party, God, is not experienced as an equal, but as the ground and cause of existence. Hence man's feelings of dependence.

Through sacramental grace men are enabled to become fellow workers of God, to help Him in realizing the divine plan for which He came on earth. Therefore Keble insisted on personal sanctification through sacramental grace. It would prove to be the most effective contribution to the restoration of the unity of the Church. Individual sanctification would ultimately result in the sanctity of the Church as a body. It remained an open question to him to what extent the external notes of the Church were dependent on her inward and spiritual privilege of sanctity. As visible unity was lost in the Catholic Church, sacramental or mystical unity ought to be regarded and defended as the last stand. If the reality of the Sacraments was denied, the result would be that the Church of England was no longer in communion with Christ.

Just like Newman in *Tract 90*, Keble thought it was his duty to the Church Universal to interpret the 39 Articles of the Church of England in an anti-'Protestant' way, especially the Articles dealing with the Sacraments. He started from the definition of a Sacrament as being 'an outward visible sign by which grace is denoted and given'. He never mentioned the disputed passage in Article xxv¹²), in which the nature

¹¹) cf. *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. x, s. xxxi, pp. 289-291.

¹²) "Those five commonly called Sacraments, that is to say, Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and extreme Unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel, being such as have grown partly of the corrupt following of the Apostles, partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures; but yet have not like nature of Sacraments with Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, for that they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God."

of a Sacrament is denied to all the Sacraments except to Baptism and the Eucharist, on the ground that there is in them 'not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God'. The ordination of the symbols by God Himself was no problem to Keble. God had spoken not only through the Bible but also through Tradition. Tradition recognized several other sacramental symbols as channels of supernatural grace, so Christians were justified in attaching biblical importance to such liturgical practices as had arisen in the first few centuries of the Church¹³). He did not speak explicitly of Confirmation, Orders, Matrimony, Confession and Extreme Unction as Sacraments, but he never doubted that they were sacramental symbols by means of which there is a contact of grace between God and man.

All his life Keble did everything in his power to give the Sacraments a new prominence in the Church of England. He was convinced that sacramental grace was the very essence of religious belief, and that therefore 'a man's opinion about the Sacraments is sure to mingle with his views of all the parts of practical religion'¹⁴). He admitted that Roman Catholics might sometimes be accused of exaggerating the sacramental character of other rites than the Sacraments, but he thought it equally reprehensible in ultra-Protestants that they altogether ignored sacramental grace. He tried to steer a middle course by following and calling to witness such an unsuspected authority as Hooker. He pointed out to his contemporaries that Hooker spoke favourably of Church ceremonies and observances, which, though not strictly Sacraments according to the precise definition of the word, had yet in them something of a sacramental nature, and had always been accounted means of grace in the early Church. Hooker acknowledged that, although these things were regarded as 'superstitions in the greater part of the Christian world', still, in their original form they sprang from 'the strength of virtuous, devout and charitable affection', and 'could not by any means be justly condemned as evils'. It was Hooker's opinion that 'the Church is fallen and

¹³) Keble referred to HOOKER, especially Book V of the *Ecclesiastical Polity*, to show that it was in accordance with Anglican Church tradition to attach equal significance to the Bible and Tradition in matters of liturgical practices. Hooker recognized the principle contained in the sixth Article of the Church, that as to supernatural doctrines Holy Scripture is paramount. Nevertheless, Hooker taught that as regards rites and customs, which are a sort of practical deductions from supernatural truths, "Apostolical tradition must be of force no less binding than the Bible". See KEBLE, Preface to the edition of Hooker's *Works*, p. xcvi.

¹⁴) KEBLE, Preface to the edition of Hooker's *Works*, p. lxxxvi.

has become unworthy of such things, instead of their being in themselves not meet for the Church' ¹⁵). Keble's long preface to his edition of Hooker's works was primarily intended to show that Hooker's sympathy was rather with the fourth century than with the sixteenth. He thought it could not be denied that Hooker clearly foresaw many dangerous errors which the opinions of some reformers were sure to produce or encourage. Keble did not know any writer since primitive times who had shown himself more thoroughly afraid of utilitarian and rationalistic tendencies.

The rest of this chapter will be devoted to Keble's views on the various Sacraments as they are to be gathered from his sermons and other writings. Most attention will be given to his ideas about Confession and the Holy Eucharist, because they throw a vivid light on his catholic point of view as regards sacramental grace. As to Baptism, some things will be added here to what has already been said about it in the course of the preceding chapters ¹⁶). About Extreme Unction nothing is to be found in Keble's publications. He never mentioned or even alluded to the anointing with chrismal oil. In connection with Confirmation, Matrimony and the Ministry, the following short remarks will make Keble's attitude towards them sufficiently clear.

Confirmation

In one of his sermons Keble said, "By receiving the Holy Ghost after being baptized by St. John in the Jordan, Christ sealed to us the gift of the Spirit, which the Church teaches us to call Confirmation" ¹⁷), implying that the example given by Christ may be regarded as His personal ordination of this Sacrament.

Keble always took great pains to prepare the young people of his parish with due earnestness for Confirmation. He taught them that they received from the Bishop, a successor of the Apostles, a great blessing to strengthen them at a time when they would begin to feel their own responsibility and would become aware of their helpless condition, if they had only their human strength to trust to. God had promised to help the Apostles and all Christians when He said, "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh" (Joel ii, 28, 29). This promise He had fulfilled on

¹⁵) KEBLE, Preface to the edition of Hooker's *Works*, pp. lxxxvi-lxxxvii.

¹⁶) cf. esp. Ch. III, pp. 65 ff.

¹⁷) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. vii, s. xxi, p. 202.

the first Whitsunday when He confirmed His Apostles. The same promise was also fulfilled as often as a Bishop 'comes to lay his hands on those who are baptized according to the Apostles' ordinance' ¹⁸). Then Christians dedicate themselves to the service of God as valiant soldiers. In doing so, they know that more may be expected from them than if they had never made such professions. By sending to them the Holy Ghost, God gives them strength, courage and power to execute what they have undertaken to do ¹⁹). By Confirmation, Keble said, a mark is made on the souls of those who worthily receive it, and this mark will never wear out.

Confirmation is a preparation for the reception of Holy Communion. If a person is unwilling to practise self-denial, if he does not seriously intend to please God in everything, if he objects to coming to Holy Communion regularly, he should not come to Confirmation ²⁰).

Matrimony

In *Tract 40* Keble explained that marriage is a different thing to a Christian from what it is to any one else. It is a special and holy token appointed by God to signify the mystical union that exists between Christ and His Church ²¹). He warned people against the notion which 'the French are full of, as well as our Frenchified newspapers', namely that marriage need no longer be sanctified by religion at all. To enter upon marriage without prayer or in any other than a religious way was, according to Keble, almost as great an affront to God as if one profaned the Holy Eucharist. "Since we are plainly told that Christian men ought never to expect any blessing from God, except as members of His Son's Body, how can one help fearing to forfeit the whole of the blessing intended in matrimony, if one scornfully refuses it as offered by the Church" ²²).

In 1857 Keble wrote a pamphlet entitled *An argument for not proceeding immediately to repeal the laws which treat the nuptial bond as indissoluble*. In the same year it was followed by a sequel in which he developed the idea that marriage, once really contracted, is indissoluble by man.

¹⁸) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. iii, s. xxv, passim.

¹⁹) cf. KEBLE, *Lyra Innocentium*, ix, no. 11.

²⁰) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. iii, s. xxii-xxx.

²¹) cf. *The Christian Year*, poem on Matrimony.

²²) cf. KEBLE, *Tract 40*.

The Ministry

In all that Keble said about this subject we may catch a tone of great concern and uneasiness. He was fully aware of the disquieting fact that many things which were of vital importance to a spiritual life were wanting in the English Church. In his opinion, the chief reason was that comparatively few clergymen and laymen were convinced of the reality of sacramental grace. Many of his rather bitter remarks were occasioned by the worldly-mindedness of too many clergymen and by the critical and suspicious looks with which many Churchmen regarded their clergy.

“And looks that pastoral eyes should greet,
As flowers the morn, fall coldly, as on empty space”²³).

Many priests seemed to have forgotten their central position in the spiritual life of the Church. Apparently, it was no longer their conviction that man's spiritual life depends entirely on a real though mysterious union with God, for which union the ministration of the Apostles and their successors is indispensable. They seemed to have forgotten that the Holy Spirit is present in their ministrations.

In *Tract 4* Keble criticized the attitude of such clergymen, saying that much of the evil in his time was caused by the fact that ‘English ministers have chosen comparatively low grounds in their defence of the ministerial commission. For many years they have been much in the habit of resting their claims on the general duties of submission to authority, of decency and order, of respecting precedents long established, instead of appealing to that warrant, which marks them exclusively for God's ambassadors. They have spoken much in the same tone as they might, had they been mere laymen, acting for ecclesiastical purposes by a commission under the Great Seal’²⁴). Anglican laymen, on the other hand, were apt to look too much at the man in the priest. With the loss of the symbolic sense they had forgotten about the mysterious powers entrusted to the priest. In one of his sermons Keble said about the position of the priest, “In himself the pastor may be more or less worthy, but whatever he is in himself, to us he is in the place of Christ, and when we see him, we ought to remember Christ. It is indeed very material for all of us to know who is the pastor truly set over us. He is our shepherd, and the sheep ought to know their own shepherd; he is our teacher, and scholars ought to know their own master; he is our father and our head,

²³) KEBLE, *Lyra Innocentium*, iv, no. 8.

²⁴) KEBLE, *Tract 4*, p. 1.

and children and families would be in a strange condition, if they did not know whom to look up to" ²⁵).

Keble reminded clergymen and laymen alike that priests are the bearers of the continuity in the Church. It was to the Apostles that the Holy Spirit came in a visible form. Through them the promise was made to the Church that God should abide in her for ever. If therefore there were no successors of the Apostles in the world, that promise would seem to have become a dead letter. The visible gift of the Holy Ghost to the Apostles was the external token of His inward presence in the hearts of men. The presence of the successors of the Apostles is therefore an external token of the same Spirit being present in the hearts of men. Through the ministry of their priests, Churchmen may receive their share of the precious gifts brought from heaven by the Holy Ghost.

Keble emphasized the sacramental quality of the symbolic 'laying on of hands'. He pointed out that just as there are special grace-giving tokens in Baptism, so there is a special symbol here, namely the 'laying on of hands', the sacramental symbol which seals the ministers of Christ for their office by immediate communication with Christ Himself. Thus priests become ministers of God's mysteries, of His Word and of His Sacraments. Christ ended the prefigurative priesthood of Aaron and his sons by accomplishing all that it signified. Since then the priesthood has been changed. Now priests really represent Christ. They really communicate to people the blessings which Christ constantly obtains for them by His heavenly intercession. By means of the memorial which Christ has appointed, they unite themselves and their people to the sacrifice which He is always making in Heaven.

Keble called it one of the chief parts of the calling of the priest to distribute what he has blessed. The priest celebrates the Communion in Christ's place. This Communion is a Sacrament as well as a sacrifice. It is Christ who distributes His Body by the hands of the priest, just as by his hands He made it what it is. By his hands He offers it to His Father. It is His doing from beginning to end ²⁶).

People must go to the priest to ask his advice in private needs, when they cannot satisfy their own conscience about coming to Holy Communion. To the priest they can make special confession of their sins. From the priest they must learn the will of God. Although people have the Bible and may think they have a fair understanding of all the essential

²⁵) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. x, s. ii, p. 19.

²⁶) *id.*, vol. i, s. xxxiii-xxxv.

parts of it, they should not neglect this special help which God has given them to acquire more knowledge of His Word. The ministry is entrusted with the Bible to teach it in its true meaning and to keep it from being mixed with the corrupt thoughts and ideas of men ²⁷).

The chief purpose of the priest's calling is the salvation of souls. He must present every man perfect in Christ before the Judgment seat on the Last Day. Whatever priests do as clergymen, their teaching, their preaching, their prayers, their Sacraments, their pastoral visiting, it has all no meaning, unless there is a Day of Judgment ²⁸).

On the whole, Keble thought, celibacy was greatly to be encouraged, although great caution is required in professing it. The words of God on celibacy as a counsel of perfection are very express and they have been at the basis of the interpretation of the whole Church from the very beginning. In this connection, Keble also quoted two Englishmen, 'both married men, and both far enough from Popery'. Hooker had said, 'Single life is a thing more angelical and divine', and Herbert, 'Inasmuch as virginity is a higher state than matrimony, and the Ministry requires the best and holiest things, the country parson is rather unmarried than married' ²⁹).

Priests cannot unordain themselves. Their going wrong does not destroy their commission. It does not interfere with the reality and necessity of Christ's call by Ordination, nor with the reality of the grace given by them. It does not do away with the spiritual state of things of which priests are a token ³⁰).

Baptism

In the course of the preceding chapters ³¹) we have already seen that Keble's views of baptismal grace and the change brought about by it in the soul leave no doubt about his catholic interpretation of sacramental grace. By true sacramental union with Christ, God gives Christians the privilege and the power, not only to be accounted, but really to become His children ³²). The supernatural state into which they are received, this act of regeneration, is to be regarded not simply as the beginning of sanctification, but as a change of an ontological character. It is, Keble

²⁷) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. i, s. xxxiv passim.

²⁸) *id.*, s. xxxv.

²⁹) KEBLE, *Letters Spiritual Counsel*, 3rd ed. 1875, no. cxxxix.

³⁰) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. vii, s. xxxiv passim.

³¹) *cf. esp. Ch. III*, pp. 65 ff.

³²) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. vii, s. xxi, p. 201.

said, almost a change of nature, a privilege to be used or abused by men at their free will ³³). He therefore called it 'utterly absurd for a baptized Christian to use the plea of natural infirmity by way of excuse for bad habits or wilful sin. A bad Christian is not a heathen, but a great deal worse and more miserable. Even if all Christians were bad, it would not at all contradict the saying that Christianity means dying to sin' ³⁴).

Keble repudiated the 'Protestant' view of Baptism which declared that a man's goodness is 'a special token from God's sanctifying Spirit, vouchsafed upon the act of his believing in Christ as his Saviour'. As contrasted with this view, he attested that 'this goodness is a regular fruit of the free gift, vouchsafed in Baptism, on man being made a member of Christ. It is not so much the work of the believer as of Christ abiding in him' ³⁵). In another place he wrote, "Believing with that peculiar trust and self-surrender called faith does not formally make a man a child of God, but it entitles or qualifies him to be made so. The new Birth which makes alienated man God's child, which causes darkness to be again 'Light in the Lord', that is a work far above all human counsels or causes, physical or moral. This is wholly and only God's work, as much so as when the world was created, as much so as when the Word of God came into His own world as one of His creatures. It is God's gift and God's doing, His Spirit given and His Spirit working" ³⁶).

Both in his poetry and in his prose, Keble was constantly searching for words which might approximately express his feelings of awe of the miraculous change brought about by God's grace in the newly baptized child. In such a child he saw God's presence more clearly than in the stars and the flowers ³⁷). The Baptism of a child recalled to him the various details of the creation of the world ³⁸). Such a child came straight from the everlasting arms, from the embrace and blessing of Christ ³⁹). The Holy Spirit 'coming silently down as the rain into a fleece of wool, or as the showers on the mown grass', changed its heart, so that 'it will be a proper soil for holy desires, good counsels and just works to spring up' ⁴⁰).

³³) KEBLE, Synod of Exeter, *Occ. Papers & Reviews*, p. 297.

³⁴) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. vi, s. xiv, p. 142.

³⁵) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, Preface, pp. lvii, lviii.

³⁶) KEBLE, *Studia Sacra*, pp. 35, 36.

³⁷) *The Christian Year*, 'Holy Baptism'.

³⁸) KEBLE, *Lyra Innocentium*, i, no. 2.

³⁹) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. x, s. xv, p. 151.

⁴⁰) *id.*, vol. ii, s. iv, p. 44.

Sin after Baptism and Confession

In his biography of Keble, W. Lock observes that Keble had an almost Calvinistic sense of the corruption of the human heart ⁴¹). It is indeed true that man's sinfulness was constantly present in Keble's mind, but what Keble said about the effect of baptismal grace is more than sufficient proof that sinfulness had for him a totally different meaning from what is denoted by it in Reformation literature. For him sin always meant a wilful act. If, however, sinfulness coloured many of his ideas about man, it was intended as a warning against the belief in the perfectibility of man propagated by rationalistic thinkers. Over against their pride and complacency he placed his reminder, that 'man must be aware that he is infected with the most miserable and fatal pestilence of sin, a bad and dangerous sickness of the soul' ⁴²). He often repeated that "even in the best and wisest of all man's works there is a great leaven of sinfulness. It mingles unawares with his charities and devotions, with all he does either towards God or man. It haunts him in his prayers and taints all his holy desires" ⁴³). "In Baptism our birth sin is forgiven as to its eternal mischief, but it continues within us ever after" ⁴⁴). Besides reminding man of his weakness, Keble's emphasis on man's sinfulness is meant to give stronger relief to the mysterious privileges granted to man in Baptism, giving him all the strength he needs to triumph in his struggle against sin. "Man is not more busy in ruining himself and hiding from the face of his Maker than our gracious Saviour is watchful to awaken and save us" ⁴⁵).

Among the remedies against sin after Baptism, Keble mentioned first of all man's conscience. "Every man, Christian or heathen, must listen with careful attention to the judgment which he passes as by instinct on himself. If this rule holds for everybody, how much more in the case of Christians, who should ever be conscious of the further inward light abiding in them: the Judge who has been sent from Heaven to preside in the court of their conscience" ⁴⁶). Conscience will stimulate a person to think with contrition of his sins. Repentance, Keble said, is 'a second Baptism', the penitential Baptism of tears. Although he feared that the condition of those who have sinned grievously after Baptism will never

⁴¹) W. Lock, *John Keble*, 5th ed., London 1893, p. 182.

⁴²) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. iv, s. vii, p. 64.

⁴³) *id.*, p. 74.

⁴⁴) *id.*, p. 64.

⁴⁵) *id.*, vol. iii, s. xiv, p. 149.

⁴⁶) *id.*, vol. i, s. xiii, p. 128.

be again as if they had not sinned, even after the most true repentance, still he set all his hopes on the manner in which the Old Testament speaks to the Jews of deliverance from their sins. The Jews were exhorted to repent, and 'seeing that they, as God's chosen people, are to be regarded as the special type and figure of each individual Christian, we may hope and pray not to be wrong in thus understanding and interpreting these comfortable words addressed to them' ⁴⁷).

Keble defined true repentance as 'patiently bearing what God sends, quietly and steadily denying ourselves, humbly and thankfully remembering the only ransom that could save us' ⁴⁸). According to him, asceticism belongs to the foundation of a Christian life. He recommended penitential fasting, abstinence and retirement for the examination of the state of one's soul as useful remedies against sin. "What is more wholesome for Christians than to interrupt for a while the full tide of worldly business and diversion, that they may think upon their sins, and fast, and punish themselves a little, by way of acknowledgement before God of what they deserve at His hands?" ⁴⁹). Repentance is not only ceasing to do evil, but also learning to live well. "By doing good to others, a man engages them to pray for him, and the prayer of the afflicted and poor is not without a special power to draw down a blessing upon the benefactor" ⁵⁰).

Confession is always a necessary part of penitence. In connection with this point Keble quoted St. John, who called it the way to complete deliverance, which means forgiveness of the past and cleansing for the future. "God's grace will take away the stain of sin and strengthen the weakness caused by our transgressions" ⁵¹). True confession is the working in the heart of two gifts, namely justifying faith and conversion. "The confessing of our sins is a sure way of knowing whether we are sound in the faith and whether our hearts are truly converted to Christ" ⁵²).

As to the notion of some Christians that sins need not be confessed to God one by one, but that it is enough if we feel a certain general and satisfying change of heart, Keble pointed out that this conflicts with the doctrine that certain sins are deadly and cut off the soul from God. It also conflicts with the Prayer Book, 'which teaches everywhere that

⁴⁷) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. i, s. xlii, p. 428.

⁴⁸) *id.*, s. xlv, p. 466.

⁴⁹) *id.*, s. xliii, p. 442.

⁵⁰) *id.*, s. xlv, p. 450.

⁵¹) *id.*, vol. iv, s. viii, p. 75.

⁵²) *id.*, s. xxvi, p. 261.

we must be very particular in confessing our sins one by one, if we can, to God; and in very many cases teaches as well that we ought by all means to confess them to him who is over us in God's place' ⁵³).

About auricular confession Keble spoke in many sermons and in a great many letters which he wrote as a spiritual counsellor. He strongly advocated it and referred to Holy Scripture and the experience of the Church as the sources of this practice. "The Church found by continual and sorrowful experience", he said, "how very imperfectly sinners did the work of repentance as long as it was left to themselves; how apt they were to put off the solemn times of self-examination, to forget altogether many very serious things, to pass lightly over what they cannot help remembering. She therefore encouraged in all ways, as do the Scriptures also, the humble and religious confession of our sins to those with whom Christ has left authority to absolve them" ⁵⁴). He frequently gave expression to his regret that comparatively few people made use of this divine gift. God purposely appointed persons to whom they might tell their griefs, whose duty it is not only to give them good advice and instruction, to keep their secret faithfully, but also to forgive their sins in the name of Christ. Keble was convinced that where this means of grace is neglected, the fulness of Christian instruction such as Christ has intended it for His people, is lacking. He thought that many people were kept from applying to their priests by the 'mere strangeness and awkwardness of the thing' ⁵⁵). He complained that the world had become extremely averse to all Church traditions. "When you point out that it is all in the Prayer Book, the world answers in scorn, that then the Prayer Book must be disregarded or altered. Now there is a profane tumult going on, and an endeavour being made to strike out of that blessed book not the least blessed and comfortable part of it, that part which directs all grievous sinners to open their griefs to the priest whom Christ had ordained to absolve them in His name" ⁵⁶).

Keble was convinced that the restoration of this tradition would be a great help to priests in their pastoral office, and the effect upon spiritual life in general could hardly be overestimated. It was his opinion that "Whoever can discreetly and wisely bring in confession, will do, I should think, one of the best things for this poor Church as she is at present" ⁵⁷).

⁵³) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. iii, s. xxxviii, p. 385. cf. id., vol. iv, s. x and xxvi passim.

⁵⁴) id., vol. iv, s. iii, p. 26.

⁵⁵) id., vol. i, s. xxxiv, p. 351.

⁵⁶) id., vol. xi, s. xxv, p. 295.

⁵⁷) KEBLE, *Letters Spiritual Counsel*, 3rd ed. 1875, no. xxi.

From personal experience he knew how much the Church of England missed by allowing auricular confession to fall into disuse. It was his constant complaint that pastors knew so little of their flocks and that they would have to go on working in the dark until the rule of systematic auricular confession was revived in the Church. "Only insiders can know how absolutely ministers are like people whose lantern has been blown out, and who are groping their way, continually stepping in puddles and splotches of mud, which they think are dry stones" ⁵⁸). That there was a great lack of the necessary contact between priest and parishioners he imputed chiefly to 'protestantizing' influences and the consequent loss of the symbolic sense. "Things like these make me at times so disheartened about our system altogether", he wrote in one of his spiritual letters. "They cause a suspicion, against one's will, that the life is gone or going out of it [the Church]. And this is why I so deprecate the word and the idea of Protestantism, because it seems inseparable to me from 'Every man his own absolver', in other words, the same as 'Peace, where there is no peace', and mere shadows of repentance" ⁵⁹). He thought the effect of what the Bishops and the Heads of Houses had been doing with Newman's *Tract 90* was becoming more and more clear. Indeed, things were not made easy for people like Keble, who advocated auricular confession. As appears from one of Keble's letters, a clergyman had been dismissed from a London cure by his Bishop for preaching a sermon on Confession. Keble commented on this case, one out of many, by saying, "Numbers of young men, such as one should most wish to have as curates, are, I imagine, deterred from ordination by fearing that they should be more or less mixed up with the Protestant interpretation of the Articles" ⁶⁰). In the same letter he must be referring to some unpleasant personal experiences, when he wrote, "Miserable recollections make me shrink from hearing confessions".

Keble's strong wish that the practice of auricular confession should be revived, did not imply, however, that he thought it absolutely necessary to confess one's sins to a priest, or that a person who neglects auricular confession commits a sin. It was only his firm conviction that in very many cases it would be better and more conducive to people's spiritual comfort. This typically individualistic attitude, so characteristic of the Anglican Church, appears very clearly from a letter Keble wrote to a clergyman who had consulted him on the question whether auricular

⁵⁸) KEBLE, *Letters Spiritual Counsel*, no. xx.

⁵⁹) id., no. xx.

⁶⁰) id., no. xxii.

confession was to be regarded as the necessary and ordained means for remission of sins. Keble's answer was, "I have no doubt, that if we are bound in this matter by the rule of the Roman Catholic Church, the law is 'No man with deadly sin on his conscience must communicate without special private absolution', without reference to the opinion or desire of the individual". He knew, on the other hand, he said, that the Church of England permits people to dispense with auricular confession altogether, 'in which permission', he added, 'there is no doubt the greatest room for abuse and self-deceit'. "However", he continued, "things must be taken as they are found, although it would greatly simplify matters and make the task of a clergyman, in a certain sense, much easier, if the English Church followed the Roman Catholic rules. The line which the Church of England has taken compels her ministers, in spite of themselves, to modify these rules in charity to the many souls entrusted to them". His advice is, therefore, that the priest and the penitent have to decide between them in each case whether there shall be auricular confession or not, how minute the confession should be, how it should be timed, and whether or not the delay of it should keep a person from Holy Communion. His final conclusion is that 'you ought not to come to Communion till you have confessed, if you distinctly believe this to be the only way of deliverance. The Church of England, however, does not authorize a clergyman to repel from Communion any one who is but longing for auricular confession from an indefinite notion that it might do him good in the way of deliverance from grievous sin' ⁶¹). English priests are not only permitted, but commanded, to leave to their penitents a certain discretion.

A passage like the following, taken from another of Keble's spiritual letters, shows how much his advice as regards the practice of confession is based on the traditional Roman Catholic directions about confession. "The best way of discharging the duty of special confession is, not to be too scrupulous in writing down things, nor yet too general, but to take some one or more points as specimens in any kind which may have become habitual, and describe the frequency of the habit by the number of sins in a given time, and the degree by some aggravating circumstances, such as our conscience most reproaches us for" ⁶²). In the same spirit he speaks of punctuality in self-examination, how particular a confession should be, about regular confession, the choice of a confessor, special and general confession and all the other practical details.

⁶¹) KEBLE, *Letters Spiritual Counsel*, no. xxiv.

⁶²) *id.*, no. xxvi.

The Holy Eucharist

All his life long Keble's activities, his thoughts and aspirations, converged towards the awakening of a renewed appreciation of the reality of Christ's presence in the world and in the life of each individual Christian. He felt that this most vital principle of all religion was in great danger of being completely lost owing to the deistic spirit of the age. Under its influence, divine Revelation and everything mysterious in life was being rejected. The adherents of natural religion could not accept sacramental grace, because they could not believe that divine grace was to be conveyed to man by means of material things. Due to the rise of symbolic thinking in the Romantic poetry of the early part of the nineteenth century, some people had come to see that a different interpretation of nature was possible beside the scientific approach to natural reality. With the help of the new poetry, Keble hoped he might succeed in changing the mentality of many people and convince Anglican Churchmen that of all the doctrines on which their Church, as a divine institution, depended for its existence and continuance, the doctrine of sacramental grace was the central one. Of all the sacramental symbols manifesting God's presence among men, the Holy Eucharist was evidently intended by God to form the climax. If communion with God was again to become man's only purpose in life, people ought to realize that the Holy Eucharist had been the perpetual witness of the presence of God ever since Christ's Incarnation. It ought again to be considered the very substance of a Christian life.

The ideas about Christ's presence in the Holy Eucharist which were current in the Church of England at the time, testified to strong influences from a 'protestantized' tradition which preferred to lay most stress on justifying faith, and sometimes, though by no means generally, on baptismal grace.

Thus, on 7 December 1841, the Bishop of Winchester refused to admit to the examination for Holy Orders Peter Young, then Keble's curate at Hursley. The reason for this refusal was that Young positively declined to endorse the Bishop's assertion that there is no mysterious presence of Christ's Body and Blood in the Holy Eucharist except in the faithful receiver. After Young had been compelled to state his own opinion about the subject, the Bishop did not charge him with any definite theological error, nor did he suspect him of heresy, but he refused to give him Priest's Orders, only allowing him to exercise the

office of deacon ⁶³). For Keble this must have been a disappointing and exasperating experience, for on 5 March 1842 he addressed a memorial to the Archbishop of Canterbury, which was both a formal petition and a respectful protest. As this letter has remained unpublished so far, its chief contents will be summarized here. They throw a clear light on Keble's attitude towards the subject. Keble said he thought it 'not lawful for any one Bishop authoritatively to enforce any statement concerning high and mysterious doctrines more detailed than those which the Formularies of the Church contain'. The Formularies did not contain, either literally or in substance, any such negative proposition as was laid before Young by the Bishop. For this Keble referred to the 28th Article, to the Declaration prefixed to the Articles by Charles I, to the Catechism and to the ritual of the Holy Communion. They only deny any corporal presence of the natural Body of Christ, but nothing is defined as regards the spiritual presence of His glorified Body. Keble then pointed out to the Archbishop that all the Fathers of the undivided Church agree upon this subject, and that nearly all ancient Liturgies agree in 'verbally imploring the descent of the Holy Ghost, not only on the worshippers, but also on the gifts, the priests being directed to lay hands upon all the Bread, and reverently to cover the remains during the Post Communion'. A distinction is evidently made between the consecrated Bread and Wine and that which has only been solemnly offered. The one is to be reverently eaten and drunk in the church, the other to be reserved by the curate for his own use. Keble concluded his letter by saying that the view which was excluded by the decision of the Bishop of Winchester, had at all times been at least allowed in the Anglican Church. "If the doctrinal standard of one diocese may thus be rendered unlike or even contradictory to that of another, it is evident, that any or all dioceses may wander very far into positive heresy with comparatively small chance of timely correction. Therefore it must be clear that the Church of England ought to deprecate and disown the very suspicion of such heresy as is constituted by the denial of a real, objective Presence, a form of heresy prevailing widely among Protestants of many denominations" ⁶⁴).

On 17 July 1841 Keble informed Pusey of the full details because he

⁶³) Young remained in Deacon's Orders until 1857, when he removed to the Exeter diocese, and was ordained for the Bishop of Exeter by the Bishop of Oxford at Cuddesdon. See W. Lock, *op. cit.*, 5th ed. 1893, p. 113.

⁶⁴) Unpublished letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury. Preserved in Keble College Library.

wanted Pusey to advise him. He told him that Mr. Crowdy, a clergyman at Winchester, had previously refused to sign Young's testimonials 'on the ground of his connection with me', and because in some sermons Young had spoken of wilful sin after Baptism in the same spirit as Keble himself was accustomed to do. From this letter to Pusey it also appears what exactly Young had said in answer to the Bishop's request to explain Consubstantiation, Transubstantiation, and the doctrine of the Church of England as differing from both. Young had spoken of a real though spiritual presence, distinct from a corporeal, on the one hand, and from a merely figurative presence on the other. Keble feared that it was all the deliberate beginning of serious vexation on the part of ecclesiastical authority, for when he had expressed his grief and amazement to the Bishop of Winchester, and had asked him if he could be of any use in clearing up matters, the Bishop had refused to discuss things with him. He thought the situation very alarming. Pusey warned Keble against driving any of the Bishops to commit themselves to apparent opposition to Catholic truth, and he added, "So long as one is satisfied that one does hold what our Church holds, I do not think that any of us need concern himself with the personal views of his Bishop" ⁶⁵). To Keble's great satisfaction, Newman approved of Young's answers. The uncertainty is illustrative of the whole situation.

The clearest definition of what Keble understood by the term 'Christ's presence in the Holy Eucharist' is to be found in an unpublished letter which he wrote to R. W. Wilberforce, who was preparing a treatise on the *Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist*. The letter is dated 8 July 1851. Keble said, "I am not quite sure that I know what an 'objective' Presence means. The saying which I feel most satisfactory is 'a Real, Sacramental Presence', by which I understand a Presence for all the purposes of the Sacrament: for worthy receivers to make them partakers of the Body and Blood of our Lord; for unworthy to make them guilty of the same; for those who turn away, to condemn them as the Jews were condemned; for all for whom the Oblation is made, to unite their spiritual sacrifices to the never-ceasing memorial of the one Bloody Sacrifice — the continued Eucharist which our Lord is offering for us in Heaven. But *not* a Presence for purposes unconnected with the Sacrament, as to fall on the ground, to be accidentally thrown away, to be lifted up, carried about, burned, spilled, or otherwise outwardly treated for honour or dishonour. The danger of a carnal belief, i.e. of

⁶⁵) see H. P. LIDDON, *Life of E. B. Pusey, D.D.*, vol. ii, pp. 231 ff.

a belief which admits of such accidents as I have endeavoured in the above definition to exclude — lies mainly in this, that it trains ordinary people to be present without real reverence; to a sort of behaviour like that of the heathen to their images. I do not well know how it can be said that, according to the Roman statements, 'the material structure is not altered', at least as ordinary people would understand them. If the Bread and Wine have entirely vanished, how can the material structure be the same?" ⁶⁶).

→ Keble took the words of institution in their literal sense. The Eucharistical Body of Christ, which is given to Christians as the inward part of the Sacrament, is the same Body which was sacrificed on the cross. The interpretation of the words 'This is my Body, which is given (broken) for you' as meaning 'This is a figure of my Body' he called Zwinglian, the interpretation 'This is something which in energy and effect will be as it were my Body' he called Calvinistic. He pointed out that neither view will bear the weight of the sixth chapter of St. John or of the sayings of the Ancient Church ⁶⁷). He held the real, sacramental presence, but disavowed corporal presence, because that plainly referred to Transubstantiation and carnal presence. He could not find a warrant for it in the Fathers of the early Church and therefore rejected it as an error. His chief aim in propagating the return to Antiquity was, as we have seen, that the symbolic way of thinking characteristic of the atmosphere of that period, should become a counterweight against the restless curiosity of contemporary investigators who, in their speculations, went beyond the lines drawn by Holy Scripture and Antiquity. Symbolic thinking would help people to discern in the Scriptures and in Antiquity a great anxiety to impress on all believers this special aspect of the doctrine of Incarnation, that the communication of the properties of the higher nature to the lower was complete from the very moment that Christ became Man. Christ's human nature implies a real presence in Holy Communion. This again implies such a "union of condescension and power for the 'deification' (so termed by the Fathers) of each Christian, as the very Incarnation and the Cross exhibited for the salvation and redemption of all mankind" ⁶⁸). Ac-

⁶⁶) Letter preserved in Keble College Library.

⁶⁷) KEBLE, *Letters Spiritual Counsel*, 3rd ed. 1875, no. cxviii.

⁶⁸) cf. KEBLE, *On Eucharistical Adoration*, 3rd ed. 1867, p. 19. It is worth noticing that Keble's use of the term 'deification' in this particular sense is very early indeed (1857). He seems to have been conscious of it himself as appears

cording to Keble, it must have been one of the purposes of Christ's stay on earth during the forty days after His death, to accustom the Apostles and disciples to the contemplation of the presence of His now spiritualized Body among them. In the Bible, this presence is purposely connected with the meals which He took with them.

As to the doctrine of Christ's presence in the Holy Eucharist, Transubstantiation constituted the only difference between Anglicanism and Rome, according to Keble. He thought the very idea of Transubstantiation a result of rationalistic inquisitiveness, although he supposed Rome had introduced it as the only alternative over against a rationalistic lack of due reverence. In Keble's opinion, it was wrong to force believing people to think of the manner of Christ's presence. It ought to be sufficient for them to maintain, with the early Fathers, the full and true co-existence of the inward and outward parts of the Sacrament.

When Keble tried to explain to unbelievers that Christ is really and substantially present in the Holy Eucharist, just as He was present to the persons with whom He spoke during His earthly life and as He is now present in Heaven, he had recourse to the analogous way of arguing. The following passage may serve as an example. "As the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and Man is one Christ, so the consecrated Bread and Wine and the Body and Blood of our Lord are one Sacrament. As we know the soul of a man, which we cannot see, to be present by the presence of his living body, which we can see, so the presence of that Bread and Wine is to us a sure token of the Presence of Christ's Body and Blood. As persons of common sense are not apt to confound a man's soul with his body, because of the intimate and mysterious connection of the two, so no plain and devout reader of Holy Scripture and disciple of the Church would find a difficulty in believing that the one may surely convey the other by a spiritual and heavenly process known to God, but unknown to all on earth" ⁶⁹).

Although, on the whole, Keble purposely tried to avoid any form of philosophical or theological argumentation, he could not always do without it, especially when he was pressed to it by the intellectual position of his opponents. Personally, however, he attached much more importance to practical and traditional evidence. Also, in connection with the problem of Christ's presence, he gave due weight to the fact that,

from the explanatory addition in brackets. The N.E.D. mentions as the date of its first occurrence 1856, namely in R. A. VAUGHAN's *Hours with the Mystics*.

⁶⁹) KEBLE, *On Eucharistical Adoration*, 3rd ed. 1867, p. 58.

from the first Pentecost onward, the Church had evidently believed and taught that Christ's Flesh and Blood in the Holy Communion is the special means appointed by God for the continuance of spiritual life. His sacramental Body is the tie by which the members of His Church adhere to their Head, and it is the remedial token and pledge by which they know that they are members of Him. It is the Sacrament which extends and applies the benefit of His Incarnation. As, however, Christ's work would have been incomplete without His ascent into Heaven, this is also a most essential link in the chain of miracles which began with His Incarnation, for the commemorative sacrifice in Heaven is necessary for the efficacy of the Eucharist offered on earth. Christ had to send down the Holy Spirit as the first fruit of His priestly office in Heaven. By the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit men may be united to Christ and made worthy to touch Him spiritually ⁷⁰).

With the greatest zeal Keble defended the traditional Anglican acceptance of the old liturgical tenet of the Real Presence. It was his conviction, based on the official documents of the English Church, that the Anglican branch of the Catholic Church had been providentially guided whenever her catholicity was threatened, either from the side of Rome or from that of continental Protestantism. When the Church of England revised her canons and formularies in connection with the doctrine of the presence and the reception of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, first in the sixteenth and afterwards in the seventeenth century, she had arranged her pronouncements and ordered her symbolical acts so as to maintain the reality both of the presence and of the sacrifice. At the same time, however, she had always warned her members against any earthly interpretation. Therefore Keble thought English Churchmen had nothing to fear as long as they could appeal to their Prayer Book, their rubrics and catechism and the pronouncements of their divines. He was of opinion that Queen Elizabeth and her advisers in 1558, as well as the restorers of the Prayer Book in 1662, both representing the whole Church of England at those dates, ought to be considered sufficient warrants against any suspicion of inadequate expression of this doctrine in the Anglican formularies. On this footing the Anglican Church had continued ever since ⁷¹).

Indeed, the catholicity of the English Church had often been threatened. It was a well-known fact, Keble said, that several English

⁷⁰) KEBLE, *On Eucharistical Adoration*, 3rd ed. 1867, ch. iii, passim.

⁷¹) id., ch. iv, passim.

Reformers did not hold a local presence of Christ's human body in the consecrated Bread itself, independent of the communicant, but it could be proved from the writings of many leading Anglican divines that the doctrine of the Eucharist was changed to accord with the teaching of the Primitive Church during the reign of James I. The question of the Real Presence had been rendered particularly intricate, Keble thought, by the highly figurative language used by the early Reformers, especially by what Keble called 'the absurd use' of the term Real Presence. It was absurd, because they meant by it a 'real absence'. The same meaning was attached to it, Keble said, by several modern theologians who even asserted that the Fathers and the old Liturgies, which they had apparently read very superficially, taught a virtual presence but a real absence of the Body and Blood of Christ. As an example Keble mentioned H. Hallam in his *Constitutional History of England* (7th ed. vol. ii, p. 62) ⁷²).

The authority of the tradition of the Primitive Church was always considered by Keble as the strongest point of his argument. Very expressly he claimed the right to call the Fathers to witness. He defended this right by saying that it would be a very hard measure indeed to condemn a person for reading the Fathers, the Councils and Liturgies in the same sense as the greater part of Christendom had always read them. Such a person could only be condemned if the literal sense of the Anglican formularies plainly condemned him. Besides, he contended, it had always been the practice of the Anglican Church to allow a very considerable latitude in the interpretation of the doctrine of the Eucharist. For this he referred to the widely different formulations of writers like Waterland, Hooker, Mede, Jackson, Cudworth, Warburton and Hoadly. He claimed the right to follow Andrewes and Laud, who belonged to a school which was in sympathy with the Catholic Church. In the Preface to the second edition of his treatise *On Eucharistical Adoration* he wrote defiantly "But be our Anglican authorities many or few, nay, were there (as we have been lately told) no instance at all . . . of an English Divine teaching exactly the tenets now so keenly opposed, we should still have a claim to be tried, not by any partial development, domestic or foreign, but by our own Formularies, interpreted by Scripture and Antiquity" ⁷³).

Keble admitted, of course, that this personal freedom, within the

⁷²) KEBLE, *On Eucharistical Adoration*, ch. iv.

⁷³) id., Preface to the 2nd edition, p. xiv.

authority of the official documents of the Catholic Church and of its branches, implied that other interpretations might be admissible. In a hitherto unpublished letter of 22 June 1853 ⁷⁴⁾ to R. W. Wilberforce, he wrote, "We ought to bear continually in mind that however evident the doctrine of Antiquity has made itself to those who have leisure and skill to read the Fathers, it has never come before Universal Christendom in the shape of a distinct synodical decision, so that there is much larger room for material as distinguished from formal heresy on this subject than for instance on the Trinity". Personally, Keble felt himself forced in reason and conscience to hold his particular view as being more probable to him than any other. However, he did not think of enforcing it as a condition of communion. He concluded his letter, saying, "We have been put on the defensive, and there, unless we could see that we have erred, we must try to make our stand. I cannot believe that people would think it a duty to expel us, though it is plain that a great many do".

The reason why each person or each portion of the Church Universal may form opinions about the several points involved in the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist is that this doctrine was never enacted by a true Oecumenical Council before the separation of the Eastern and Western Churches. Therefore, nobody is competent to impose any opinion as an article of faith. For instance, Keble contended, there is not any authority for the saying that the 'whole Christ' remains in 'each particle of either kind'. It is only a deduction made by certain divines in the Middle Ages from certain formulae which have been accepted by certain portions of the Church. Neither is it anywhere to be found in so many words that 'the wicked eat and drink the Body and Blood in the same sense that the penitent do' ⁷⁵⁾.

Undoubtedly it was due to the spread of ideas which threatened the spiritual life of his Church, that Keble's opinion about this subject changed, or rather deepened, in the course of his life. Only towards 1860 could he expressly declare that he fully agreed with Caroline Divines like Andrewes. This growth may be demonstrated by the following facts.

In one of the poems of the *Christian Year*, namely the one entitled 'Gunpowder Treason', the following lines occur which afterwards caused some consternation.

⁷⁴⁾ The letter is preserved in Keble College Library.

⁷⁵⁾ KEBLE, *On Eucharistical Adoration*, ch. iv, *passim*.

O come to our Communion Feast,
There, present in the heart,
Not in the hands, th'Eternal Priest
Doth His true self impart.

The words 'present in the heart, *not* in the hands' cannot denote anything else than that in Holy Communion Christ is not objectively present, but only in the heart of the faithful recipient. As early as 25 Febr. 1835, Hurrell Froude had written to Keble, "How can we possibly know that it is true to say 'not in the hands'? . . . You seem cramped by Protestantism" ⁷⁶). In 1845 Keble stated that he did not fully understand the doctrine when he wrote the *Christian Year*, but nevertheless, he did not alter the line in any of the many subsequent editions. In 1855 Pusey discussed the matter with him, but still no alteration followed. However, when some weeks before his death the lines were quoted in Convocation by Bishop Jeune as expressing Keble's opinion against a real, objective Presence, this weighed so much upon Keble's mind that he decided to make the alteration. It was only actually carried out after his death ⁷⁷). The change created quite a stir. In a letter to the editor of the *Times* (13 December 1866), Pusey explained that Keble took his own words in the same sense as when Holy Scripture says, 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice', meaning 'no sacrifice without mercy'. So what Keble meant was that the objective presence was of no avail, unless Christ was received in 'the cleansed abode of the heart'. Pusey added that, when he warned Keble that this was not the interpretation given to his words, Keble had only answered by making some disparaging remark on the *Christian Year*, showing that he regarded it as the work of his younger years and that he would not have anything to do with it any more. But when the passage in question was cited in Convocation as a proof of his matured conviction against the Real Presence, it caused him so much pain that he wanted to have a letter written to *The Guardian* to draw attention to an explanation of the lines which he had given in 1857 in his treatise *On Eucharistical Adoration*. In the preface to the second edition of this work, there is a footnote on p. xiii, referring to a passage in the text which says that the terminology of some Anglican divines, often alleged against the doctrine of a real, objective presence, is in reality directed, among other things, against 'the notion of a gross, carnal Presence'. And Keble sub-

⁷⁶) FROUDE, *Remains*, ed. Rivington, London 1838, p. 403.

⁷⁷) W. LOCK, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

joined, "I may perhaps be excused for exemplifying this by the expression sometimes quoted from the *Christian Year*, 'present in the heart, not in the hands' ". Then, Pusey went on in his letter, it was brought home to Keble that the lines would still be quoted against the doctrine as long as they remained unaltered. After considering for three days, Keble wrote to Pusey on 6 March 1866 (he died on 29 March), "I have made up my mind, that it will be best, when a reprint is called for, to adopt — 's⁷⁸) emendation and note, with a few words, pointing out that it only expresses more directly the true meaning of the present text". So 'Not in the hands' was to be changed into 'As in the hands'. During the short illness which set in a fortnight afterwards and which resulted in his death, Keble is said to have expressed to his wife that it was a great comfort to him that he had decided to make the change.

Pusey's letter to the editor caused several readers to remonstrate. There was, for instance, a letter to the *Times* of 18 December 1866, in which a protest was lodged against this 'ritualistic falsification of Keble's *Christian Year*'. The writer concluded his letter with the words, "It is manifest that the original words expressed Keble's idea as derived from Hooker, when he wrote them. As he did not think fit to alter them in his lifetime, it is surely little less than forgery to alter them now". In another letter to the *Times*, a reader said that he deeply regretted, "that the conduct of Keble's friends appears to lay him open to the censure pronounced by Dr. Johnson on Bolingbroke, that he charged a blunderbuss which he had not the resolution to fire off himself, but left for another to draw the trigger after his death". The poem, this writer said, was meant to point out the difference between certain views taken by the Church of Rome and others by the Church of England. Changing 'not' into 'as' would stultify and make utter nonsense of the original purpose of the whole poem⁷⁹).

In his attempts to convince his contemporaries of the reality of Christ's presence and at the same time of the necessity of communion with Him in the Holy Eucharist, Keble also approached the problem from another side. He represented the Holy Eucharist under its sacrificial as well as its sacramental aspect. "The holy memorial of God made Man and crucified for us must ever go on being offered and received until the

⁷⁸) I have not succeeded in ascertaining whose emendation is meant.

⁷⁹) see J. T. COLERIDGE, *op. cit.*, p. 169 ff. cf. *Church Quarterly Review*, July 1878, pp. 539-544.

last morning breaks upon the earth, and the very meaning and substance of that Sacrament, the Body of our Lord, shall appear openly in the eyes of men" ⁸⁰).

It is worth noticing that by throwing the sacrificial aspect into relief, Keble took up a position which distinguished him from the majority of Anglican clergymen and laymen. He knew that 'the sacramental aspect is recognized more unreservedly by the Office of the English Church, and more generally and heartily received by her members than the sacrificial aspect' ⁸¹). The distinction of the two aspects, however, was certainly not meant to imply a possible separation of the two in religious practice. In several places Keble gave expression to his strong feelings against what he called 'the foreign custom' of assistance at the Holy Eucharist without actual communion. This custom seemed to him to be open to two grave objections. "It cannot be without danger of profaneness and irreverence to very many, and of consequent dishonour to the Holy Sacrament, and it has brought in and encouraged a notion of a quasi-sacramental virtue in such attendance". He took this point to be the essence of the error stigmatized in the 31st Article ⁸²). The practice of participating 'in Missa *vel* Communione', spoken of, for instance, in a book like the *Imitatio Christi*, as if the one brought a spiritual benefit of the same order as the other, Keble thought utterly unauthorized by Scripture and Antiquity. Still, he admitted that he did not feel competent to deny that there may be a number of cases in which attendance without communicating may be morally and spiritually beneficial. In his opinion, it could not possibly be called sacramentally beneficial. He advised any person who thought it was somehow beneficial to him, to consult his spiritual adviser and act accordingly, always on condition that the clergyman of the particular church did not object to such practice ⁸³).

Frequent communion, he thought, was the only way of remaining in life-giving contact with God. "It is the regular, spiritual food of the living and true members of Christ, and the healthful soul longs after it,

⁸⁰) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. i, s. xlvi.

⁸¹) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. x, p. 264.

⁸²) The passage referred to says "Wherefore the sacrifices of Masses, in the which it was commonly said, that the Priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, . . . were blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits."

⁸³) cf. KEBLE, *Letters Spiritual Counsel*, 3rd ed. 1875, no. cxxviii. cf. KEBLE, *Letter on the Ritual of the Ch. of E.*, letter to the editor of the *Literary Churchman*, (Dec. 1865).

as the healthful body for its common, wholesome food". If people desired and endeavoured to improve, but felt unable to make up their minds as yet to seek Christ in His Holy Sacrament, he advised them to make such a time a period of very frequent spiritual communion. By this Keble understood, that such people should continually try to communicate with Christ in the form of prayers, confession of sins, thanksgiving and intercession for others. "They should give the Master of the Feast no rest, until they have obtained His leave to come to it again" ⁸⁴).

Keble was convinced that the sacrificial aspect was accepted by the Church of England. The fact that pointed most clearly in that direction, he thought, was that the Church had always observed this important distinction between Baptism and the Eucharist, that in case of necessity all Christians are empowered to administer Holy Baptism, but none may 'make the Body of Christ' except those who are specially commissioned by the Apostles. From this he concluded that the Anglican Church accepted the idea of one Consecrator only, Christ Himself. Besides, in the Catechism it was required that Churchmen received 'Bread and Wine which the Lord had commanded'. He thought that these words had to be understood as meaning 'over which Christ Himself has spoken the words of institution', applying in this construction of the words the well-known saying of St. Augustine, "Accedit verbum ad elementum et fit sacramentum". From the fact that there is but one Consecrator, it followed, Keble inferred, that there is but one Eucharist, and that the celebrations are not so many commemorations of the first offering in the room of the Last Supper, but an actual continuation of it. The continuation on earth is to be recognized as the image of its continuation in heaven which began on our Lord's Ascension. It is the pleading sacrifice, not the expiatory sacrifice on the cross, which is repeated and continued on our altars. "As a peace-offering He comes to apply His own merits, not as a proper sin-offering, because, when on the Cross, He merited all for us" ⁸⁵). It is the unbloody sacrifice of the New Testament, offered up to the Father for a memorial of the real bloody and painful offering on the cross.

Keble knew that a regular exposition of this great evangelical truth would involve a detailed commentary on large portions of Holy Scripture, but for practical purposes he thought it would be sufficient, by way of argumentation, to point to the fact that the doctrine of the

⁸⁴) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. iii, s. xxi and xxx.

⁸⁵) *id.*, vol. iii, s. xxi, p. 217.

Eucharistical sacrifice is evidently contained in the very words of institution, and therefore absolutely inseparable from the true meaning and right use of the Sacrament. The key words in the words of institution are 'remembrance', 'memory', and 'memorial'.

The true oblation in the sacrifice is in no sense to be regarded as earthly or material, but as altogether spiritual. The symbolic sense will be a great help for the faithful to see that 'there is a Presence most real and substantial, but not corporeal or natural, not such as would be recognized by the bodily senses, though the veil were ever so much taken away. It is the Presence of His glorified humanity, literally true, though to us undefinable. With the man who ministers He is virtually present, and as our sacrifice He is really present' ⁸⁶).

Some of the greatest Fathers of the Primitive Church were quoted by Keble in evidence of this view of the Christian sacrifice, especially St. Ambrose and St. Chrysostom. Their chief source was the Epistle to the Hebrews where it says "The Law hath a shadow of good things to come, but not the very image of the things" (ch. x). The Fathers thought the omission of the words 'bread' and 'wine' significant, Keble explained, because from it they concluded that it was the will of the Holy Ghost that the worshipper should not allow his mind to dwell in the least upon what he sees in the Sacrament. It is strictly to be to him an image, lifting him up to the great invisible realities, going on both on earth and in heaven ⁸⁷).

As to the 31st Article, Keble was sure that it could not possibly be adduced in refutation of this view. It could not be interpreted so as to deny the commemorative sacrifice in the Holy Eucharist, for it did not speak about the Eucharistical Sacrifice being one with Christ's constant sacrifice in heaven.

We have already seen ⁸⁸), that Keble distinguished a double element in every religious experience, the dedication to God and the representation of the favour received from God. He made use of this distinction by applying it as another argument in favour of the sacrificial aspect of the Holy Eucharist, showing that the sacrificial aspect also appears from the element of sanctification which this Sacrament contains. The devotional or dedicatory element in the religious symbol derives its functional value from the solemn act of Christ, who willingly set Him-

⁸⁶) KEBLE, *On Eucharistical Adoration*, p. 73.

⁸⁷) id., ch. iii.

⁸⁸) cf. Ch. VI, p. 123.

self the task of doing the will of His Father in His Incarnation, in His Death and in the whole economy of salvation. Sanctification, said Keble, is an ecclesiastical and liturgical term, implying solemn devotion to the service of God. The process of sanctification is to be ascribed to God's sacramental word, effectually and solemnly pronounced for that purpose ⁸⁹). The term 'sanctification', he pointed out, is constantly employed in the Old Testament, in the Pentateuch, wherever the Mosaic Ritual is set forth to denote solemn consecration and devotion to God's service, either of persons or of things. It always refers to an outward dedication or something equivalent to it, no doubt to be taken in a symbolical sense. But, Keble asked himself, what is dedicated? English Churchmen, he said, are apt to answer that it is the inward change of heart brought about by the Holy Ghost in each Christian who does not prevent it. This was, according to Keble, the usual meaning generally associated with the term 'sanctification'. On scriptural grounds he was, however, convinced that this is not its primary sense. To him, sanctification is entirely the property of Christ, and the term is only applicable to the members of His Mystical Body and to all created things in a secondary and derivative sense. It can only be used in reference to their dependence on Christ's Incarnation and His first Sanctification. Keble found evidence for this interpretation in the words of St. John, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified through the Truth" (xvii, 19). He paraphrased these words, making Christ say about the Holy Eucharist, "I am even now sanctifying Myself, I am repeating and rehearsing in their sight the solemn act by which I devoted Myself to do My Father's will in redeeming mankind. I offer Myself anew in the Sacrament of My Body and Blood, which I have just instituted, that they, partaking of Me in it, may be also solemnly dedicated, sanctified and offered, not in rite and shadow, but in deed and in truth" ⁸⁹).

From these words of Christ, Keble concluded, the two chief points of the evangelical doctrine concerning the Holy Eucharist become clear. They show that the substance of the Eucharistical Office consists in two parts, in its sacrificial and in its sacramental character. The sacrifice is denoted by 'I sanctify Myself', and the Sacrament by 'that they also may be sanctified through the Truth'. It is evident that the Holy Eucharist is Christ's memorial sacrifice, a means of obtaining God's favour and pardon for all who truly repent, and that it is at the same

⁸⁹) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. x, p. 254.

time a Sacrament, a means by which we are united to Christ, and so 'made more and more partakers of His righteousness here and of His Glory hereafter'. By 'memorial sacrifice' is meant, Keble explained, that the offering in the Holy Communion not only puts us in mind of the great things which Christ has done for us, but also that it puts God in mind of them. Christ offers Himself continually for the application of the one great atonement. In the Eucharist He offers the remembrance of His sacrifice to His Father for the application of that sacrifice to each particular soul according to its needs. "The Eucharist is the very intercession, transacted in image and mystery, not in mere shadow and figure, on earth, which in Heaven takes place according to the glorious reality of that blessed place" ⁹⁰).

Following the example of St. Irenaeus, Keble liked to consider the articles of the Catholic faith as symbolized in or associated with the great sacramental rite of the Holy Eucharist. In a passage in his treatise *On Eucharistical Adoration* he wrote, "By receiving His creatures of Bread and Wine, we acknowledge Him Creator of heaven and earth against all sorts of Manicheans; receiving Christ's Body is confessing His Incarnation; and adoring it, His Divinity; it is the memorial of His death, and the participation of that sacrifice which supposes Him raised and ascended into heaven; it is obeying His command, so as to show forth His death till He come; it is drinking 'into one Spirit'; it is partaking of that 'one Bread' which makes us 'one Body', the Holy Catholic Church; it is 'the Communion of Saints'; it is the Blood shed 'for the remission of sins'; it is the last Adam coming to be in us a quickening spirit, to seal us for the 'resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting' " ⁹¹).

Eucharistical adoration, which Keble defined as 'the confession of Christ's divinity manifested in the material forms of the consecrated Bread and Wine', was to him the most natural consequence of Christ's presence. He could not imagine any one believing Christ to be present in the Eucharist without acknowledging the greatness of the benefit offered in the Sacrament and the deep condescension and humiliation on the part of Christ by special adoration. In his opinion, 'it is as impossible for devout faith, contemplating Christ in this Sacrament, not to adore Him, as it is for a loving mother, looking earnestly at her child,

⁹⁰) KEBLE, *Letters Spiritual Counsel*, 3rd ed. 1875, no. cxxiv.

⁹¹) KEBLE, *On Eucharistical Adoration*, pp. 131, 132.

not to love it' ⁹²). He was convinced that no kind of worship of the inward part of the Sacrament was forbidden by any Anglican formulary; on the contrary, he thought that such worship was implicitly commanded in several places. Towards the end of his life, however, this 'vital doctrine of the Gospel was put in jeopardy' by the decision of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who declared in his judicial sentence in the case of Archdeacon Denison that it was 'contrary to the Articles to say that Christ Himself, the Thing signified of the Sacrament, is to be worshipped in and with the Sacrament'. Keble's defence of the doctrine was his long treatise *On Eucharistical Adoration*, the most technically theological of all his writings ⁹³). In its five chapters he worked out successively what natural piety suggested with regard to the subject, what Holy Scripture appeared to sanction, what the Fathers and the old Liturgies indicated to have been the practice of the Primitive Church, what the Church of England enjoined or recommended in her Prayer

⁹²) KEBLE, *On Eucharistical Adoration*, p. 2.

⁹³) In 1853, Archdeacon Denison had preached two sermons in Wells Cathedral on the Real Presence. In 1856, he was tried in the Pro-Diocesan Court at Bath before the Archbishop of Canterbury and called upon to retract his statements concerning the Real Presence and the worship due to it under the forms of bread and wine. When he refused, Denison was deprived of his vicarage and archdeaconry, but the sentence was overthrown by the Final Court of Appeal in 1858. During the process, Pusey and Keble had been Denison's advisers. They circulated a protest stating their belief that the doctrine had been held as a point of faith from the earliest times, and that the practice of worshipping Christ in the Eucharist had always been common throughout the Church. They appealed to a lawful Synod, as only the voice of the whole Church could bind the conscience. They openly declared that they would go on teaching what they had always taught. Very soon after the protest, Keble published his treatise.

In August 1857, Bishop Forbes of Brechin, Scotland, stated his opinion about the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist in his Primary Charge to his clergy. He emphasized its sacrificial aspect and its mystical identity with Christ's sacrifice, concluding that it was a duty of Christians to worship Christ present in the material elements. The Bishops of Edinburgh, Argyll and Glasgow protested against this charge. Keble wrote a long letter to the Bishop of Edinburgh in which he criticized the latter's arguments. In May 1858, the Bishops issued a pastoral letter to their clergy in which they said they regretted the publication of Bishop Forbes' charge, as it contained unsound and erroneous views. Pusey being ill, Keble had been the chief adviser of Forbes. As an honorary canon of the College of Cumbrae, Keble addressed to the presbyters of the Scotch Church a pamphlet entitled *Considerations suggested by a Late Pastoral Letter on the Doctrine of the Most Holy Eucharist*. In it he adduced several reasons why the presbyters were not bound to accept the contents of the pastoral letter of the Bishops as authoritative. — See W. LOCK, *op. cit.*, pp. 160 ff.

Book, Articles and Homilies, if explained in a Catholic sense, and finally what to him were the duties of Anglican Churchmen with respect to the case. He took the faithful acceptance of Christ's real presence for granted and tried to illustrate and enforce from this doctrine the moral and devotional duty of adoration. His protest was chiefly directed against the fact that the 39 Articles were being made the sole standard of the Church of England, which implied a material narrowing of her pale of admissible doctrine. Just as in the Gorham case, the Archbishop of Canterbury seemed to lay down the rule that nothing should be held obligatory, unless it was affirmed in the Articles, thus excluding any interpretation by comparison with other documents of co-ordinate authority ⁹⁴).

Keble's personal point of view may be summarized in the following dogmatical statements. They show that he wanted to bring out the special bearing of the doctrine of the Incarnation on all Eucharistical questions. The strictly logical form in which his argumentation is carried out is to be found hardly anywhere else in all his writings. In the defence of the very essence of the Catholicity of his Church, he could not suffer his natural discretion to prevent him from declaring his convictions. He stated: —

1. "I believe that there is one, and only one, True Body of the Lord Jesus, in the sense in which any man's natural body is called his own. That Body, I mean, which He took of the Blessed Virgin Mary when He came into the world".

2. "That neither this Body, nor the reasonable Soul which He took to Himself at the same time, nor His Manhood, consisting of both together, have or ever had any distinct personality, but have subsisted, and ever will subsist, as taken into the Person of the Eternal Son of God".

3. "That as the Divine Word or Person of Christ is everywhere and always present and adorable, so ever since the Incarnation, the Presence of the Body of Christ, or the Presence of the Soul of Christ, or of both united, whenever and wherever and however He vouchsafes to notify it, it is to be taken as a warrant and call for especial adoration on the part of all His reasonable creatures, to whom the knowledge of the two natures has been revealed: adoration to Him as to God most high, and

⁹⁴) KEBLE, *On Eucharistical Adoration*, pp. 162, 163.

to His holy Manhood, not separately, but as subsisting in His Divine Person". "I believe therefore", he added,

4. "That His sacrificed Body, hanging on the Cross and laid in the grave, was adorable".

5. "I understand the words, 'This is My Body which is given (broken) for you', literally taken, to affirm that what He gives us in the Sacrament is the same Body which was sacrificed on the Cross".

6. "And I believe that those words ought to be literally taken". Therefore,

7. "I believe that what He gives us in the Sacrament, under the Name of His Body, is adorable" ⁹⁵).

Keble's views of the Sacraments are a strong proof of his unconditional faith in the supernatural vitality of the English Church. In spite of the many false notions, the opposition and indifference he met with on all sides, his confidence in her was unshaken. He firmly believed that she was a living branch of the Church Universal, because he thought that she could justly lay claim to being a channel of divine grace among Anglicans. If only the innate sacramental sense of large groups of Churchmen could be brought to life again, their experience of the mystical workings of grace would help the Church gradually to recover from the injuries inflicted upon her by the rationalistic spirit of the age.

⁹⁵) KEBLE, *On Eucharistical Adoration*, pp. 206, 207.

CHAPTER VII

KEBLE'S VIEW OF THE ANGLICAN POSITION

In the preceding chapters we have subjected the principal aspects of Keble's conception of man's situation in the world to a closer examination. We shall now conclude this essay by showing how it helped him to decide on his personal attitude, when he was faced with the conversion of Newman. It is after all a fascinating study to examine the grounds on which Keble remained true to the Anglican Church.

His firm belief in the Church of England as a living branch of the Church Universal is, of course, a point of great importance in this connection. Still, it appears from several of his writings, especially from those of the years 1841-1845, that he sometimes had his misgivings whether the Anglican communion was a real Church. On some occasions, he feared that he would eventually have to leave his Church, but even then he never thought of going to Rome. In 1841 he wrote to J. T. Coleridge, "I cannot go to Rome till Rome be much changed indeed; but I may be driven out of the English Church . . . ; and many will, I fear, not be content to be nowhere, as I should feel it my duty to try to be" ¹). As a parish priest, he was conscious of the great distance separating him from his parishioners. The practical failure of his Church often weighed heavily upon him. "How blindly I go about the parish", he complained to Coleridge in 1843, "not knowing what men are really doing; and whenever I do make any discoveries, they disclose a fearful state of things; and even when there is some seriousness, of respect and confidence towards the Priest as such there is none, or next to none" ²). During such periods of dejection, he jealously felt the attractiveness of 'the truth and beauty and majesty of so much which they [Roman Catholics] have and we seem at least to have not' ³). It made him see his task all the more clearly. "I ought to lay myself out upon those additions to her [the English Church] system and ritual which I am sure are in Antiquity, such as Monasticism, Prayers for the Dead, etc.,

¹) J. T. COLERIDGE, *op. cit.*, p. 299.

²) *id.*, pp. 301-302.

³) *Correspondence Newman, Keble and others*, Birmingham Oratory, p. 297.

rather than upon those which by consent of all parties were not developed till afterwards" ⁴⁾). Granting the possibility that the medieval Church system was the intended development of primitive Catholicity, Keble still thought it far more natural for the Church of England first to return to the Ancient Church and afterwards to grow towards the medieval system, rather than to proceed at once to it. Everything ought first to be done to revive all that was typical of the primitive Church.

Anglican Churchmen first ought to be made aware of the fact that their communion possessed all the notes of the Church except visible unity with the two other branches. It was linked with the Apostles by due succession. It acknowledged the same Scriptures as the undivided Church had done. It virtually possessed the Sacraments at least as completely as the other branches. Unfortunately, several of them had gone out of use, but Keble was quite hopeful that they could be brought to life again, if only the sacramental sense of men could be awakened. Then Anglicans would realize that the Sacraments are the very essence of Catholicity, because they are intended to be the most efficacious means of union with Christ. Keble fixed all his hope on their unifying power. "The Sacraments alone, worthily received, by virtue of the Spirit which is in them, will make and keep us one in Him" ⁵⁾).

He contended that the strongest point in favour of the Anglican Church was the fact that she had always remained faithful to what the whole Church had taught out of Scripture. Both Roman Catholics and 'Protestants' had given up the notion of holding by the old traditional doctrine 'everywhere, always and by all'. Rome represented to him the modern theory of development. It had not only acknowledged new facts, but it had also adopted new principles. It assumed that men have a right to judge what must and what must not take place in heaven. The one great difference between the English Church and Rome was to him that, just like Rome, the Anglican Church recognized the mystery of post-baptismal sin; it accepted every statement of Scripture and Tradition regarding the presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist; it venerated the Blessed Virgin Mary ⁶⁾ as truly the Mother of God; it admitted the fact that God may honour certain exemplary Christians; but — and that was the essential difference — the Anglican Church did not dare to pronounce it 'necessary to salvation' that men should believe in

⁴⁾ *Correspondence Newman, Keble and others*, Birmingham Oratory, p. 308.

⁵⁾ *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. vi, s. 16, p. 170.

⁶⁾ cf. Keble's poem 'Mother out of Sight', publ. as an appendix to his *Lyra Innocentium*, ed. Walter Lock, Methuen, 1899.

Purgatory, indulgences, Transubstantiation, Mary being the one mediatrix of prayer, worship of saints, and all the other points which Rome had added on its own authority ⁷). He thought the evidence for these new things was mainly made up of subtle inferences, philosophical and historical, drawn from premisses more or less obscure and ambiguous. Anglicans had accepted once for all the unalterable testimony of the whole Church as it is contained in their Prayer Book. There was no need for them to argue and have doubts about their faith. They depended, not each man on himself nor all on one single Bishop, but each and all upon the Mystical Body with which Christ had promised to be to the end of the world. That made the Anglican Church the safest and most trustworthy branch of the Church. Of all Christians, the Anglicans were most free to give all their attention to keeping Christ's commandments ⁸). By earnestly putting them into practice, they could contribute greatly to the sanctity of the Church and to the mystical unity of the three branches.

Another strong point in favour of the English Church was, he thought, the fact that she had never anathematized the other branches. He pointed out that it was evidently implied in the Prayer Book, for instance in the preface to the Ordination Services, that Romans and Greeks were considered as Catholics, and that English Churchmen were in communion with them, although visible unity was in abeyance. He maintained that it was the very foundation of the Anglican theory of Church unity that those from whom the English Church is separated are yet in the Church. Those other Christians were 'nearer to English Churchmen . . . than any human relation can make them'. "If called on by sufficient authority to concur in words which sound harsh towards them, the nature of the case binds us to take those words in the lowest sense which honest interpretation will allow . . .". Showing how far apart he felt from those persons in the English Church who had to be tolerated as 'Puritans and other Rationalists', and how closely related he felt to all non-Anglican Catholics, Keble added, "If such considerations be due to those yet in communion with us, (alas! how many) who deny and disavow the Catholic meaning of our formularies: they are due no less to those whose Creed is substantially the same with our own, though we may not worship together" ⁹).

⁷) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, Preface, pp. lxi-lxii.

⁸) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. vi, s. 17, pp. 175-179.

⁹) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, Preface, p. lxx.

As long as the Church Universal is divided into three communities, each with its Apostolical Succession, its Creeds and Sacraments, it is but natural, Keble thought, that in such deplorable circumstances one branch should excel in one respect and another in a different respect. He was convinced that this did not alter the fact that, in all three branches, the Church is a sure guide as regards the doctrines of the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation, Christ's Office and Passion, His Resurrection and man's redemption. Unfortunately, in consequence of its divided state, the authority of the Church is reduced to these dogmatical truths. As to the many other important points, the facts are no longer generally accepted. There is a startling indecision about them in one branch, and a no less startling positiveness in another. Now the crucial question arises, whether such points represent things 'necessary to salvation' or things 'necessary to Church communion', two terms which, he asserted, are by no means convertible¹⁰). It was for Keble an incontestable fact that laws of universal obligation require the collective authority of the successors of the Apostles. As long as this collective authority is in abeyance, such laws cannot be drawn up. Any dispute on debated points can therefore not be brought to an issue until there is a true oecumenical Council. As long as there is no such Council, Christians can do nothing but stay in the Church in which they were born. Keble admitted that this conditional position of his Church, dependent as it is on a future oecumenical Council, was far from satisfactory to him. But, however unattractive it might be, the fact had to be accepted as a result of the decayed condition in which Christianity found itself. The state of decay could not be escaped by going to another branch. "To a mind rightly constituted, the act of God's Providence, appointing a man's position in this world and the next, will be far more decisive in keeping him where he is, than any dream of promised comfort or assurance in withdrawing him from his post"¹¹).

What did Keble mean by 'a mind rightly constituted'? From the answer to this question it appears, that it was primarily the position which Keble took up as regards the attainment of knowledge about reality, that determined his attitude towards life. At the root of his standpoint lay the firm conviction, always present in his mind, that the world is decayed. Scripture had taught him this, and besides, it had taught him that Christianity was the only expedient to supply the con-

¹⁰) KEBLE, *Tract 4*, pp. 5, 6.

¹¹) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. xii, p. 305.

sequent deficiencies of human nature and save the world from further decay. He thought it his duty to remind his contemporaries of these elementary facts. Apparently, they had forgotten them, otherwise it was impossible to account for their belief in the perfectibility of man. Their doing so was to Keble the strongest proof that man's fallen state was no longer a reality to them.

Keble's writings clearly show that, when he called human reason 'darkened' owing to original sin, he did not mean that it was only weakened in its accidental workings, as Roman Catholics interpret the term. He started from the supposition that the mind is mutilated in its essential activity, namely in its attainment of the truth. Logic could not be one of the essential means to acquire knowledge about God. He thought Rationalism had made it abundantly plain that human reason, if left to itself, prevents a man from rising above the material world by means of faith. It makes him self-satisfied, so that he forgets his dependence on God.

The 'rightly constituted mind' is not of the enquiring type. It does not regard truth as an object of inquiry, but as the reward of a holy life.

To characterize Keble's mental attitude, and to contrast it with the prevailing attitude, we might call it 'receptive'. Life was to him a trying task, assigned to man by God. This task can only be brought to a successful conclusion in complete dependence on God's grace. Man should apply himself to it in all earnestness, he should exert himself to the utmost and leave nothing undone, but he should never for a moment rely on his own abilities. A true Christian should never forget that he is a penitent whose only duty it is to please God in everything and promote the sanctity of Christ's Mystical Body by his personal co-operation with God's grace. But for a complete submission of the will, co-operation is impossible. In his *Studia Sacra*, Keble expressed this fundamental principle of his by saying, "The spirit of the Gospel is a dutiful spirit. It looks simply to our Saviour's will, and tries as it may to be conformed to His likeness; thankfully availing itself of every help which His good Providence and gracious Spirit afford" ¹²).

Providence affords this help by supplying the human will with motive powers. All there is in the world can be used as such, if only man suffers himself to be led by his 'moral sense', in which the will is supreme. Then his will is stirred both by inward and outward motive powers.

Inwardly, there are the innate feelings of love and fear of God. They

¹²) KEBLE, *Studia Sacra*, p. 109.

have their supernatural complement in the revelation of the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation and the Resurrection. However, these doctrines can only be a spiritual help to man, if his attitude towards them is absolutely practical. He must accept them with unquestioning faith and regard them as living realities, purposely intended to bring Christ nearer to him. Speculations on them only lead to heresies, as is proved by Church history. In an age so much inclined to theorizing, it is Keble's merit to have pointed out that the particular and the concrete must always be more effective than the general and the abstract. He endeavoured to bring home to his contemporaries that for those who know from experience that the Spirit of God is constantly close to them as 'an ever present friend, watching every thought, word and action, prompting to all good and checking all evil' ¹³), such personal experiences are much more effective than the belief in God's omnipresence. In this way, the truth of these doctrines may become much more operative. If regarded as a living reality, 'the doctrine of the Incarnation opens a way for all our best human affections and directs them all towards religion. The Bible speaks of God sympathizing with us. Christ Himself has declared His willingness to feel towards us as brethren and sisters, inviting and encouraging us to cultivate the corresponding affections towards Him' ¹⁴). With a divine understanding of the human situation, God has done more than reveal Himself. After His Resurrection, He has sent the Holy Spirit and founded His Church, the mystical continuation of His life on earth, because He wanted to be permanently present among men. To this Church He has entrusted the Sacraments by which man's feelings of love and fear are strengthened.

Outwardly, all that God has revealed may serve as motive power to the will. It is not for man to make out in what exactly Revelation consists. On the authority of the Church, he has to accept the truth of Christianity and the authority of the Scriptures. He should 'shrink from all attempts to disparage the Old Testament under the pretence of exalting the New; or the Sacraments in order to magnify the Word; or the example of the Church and Saints of old, on the ground of each person being the best judge of what edifies himself' ¹⁵). Exegesis is consequently not primarily an intellectual activity to Keble. In his opinion, it is purely an act of faith. The gulf between human nature

¹³) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. iii, s. 24, pp. 243, 244.

¹⁴) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. i, p. 12.

¹⁵) KEBLE, *Studia Sacra*, p. 109.

and Revelation is bridged by the humble submission of the will and the obedient acceptance of the truth revealed. In order to know what they have to believe, men have only one thing to do, namely to receive on the authority of their Church what the whole Church has always taught as articles of faith. They must try to make that out with the help of the best means that God has given them. Having found it, they must apply it in everyday life. In the end, their practical experience of its great value will result in the full possession of the whole truth.

Besides, there is a great help in the proper interpretation of Nature as a means of getting into contact with God. Keble interpreted Nature as a kind of sacrament, enabling men to participate in God. In his design for a life of faith, symbolism was the binding force in the struggle against the disintegrating influences of eighteenth century Deism. ← Analogy was to him 'the principle which our great Father has ordained to guide His children in practical matters' ¹⁶). Rather than making a man feel complacent in the seeming possession of certainty, analogy and the probability resulting from it, will search a man's conscience, they will rouse his affections, they will stimulate his imagination and move his will. Probability gives scope to feelings of wonder, and such feelings will cause a person to go on exerting himself, in the hope that eventually the whole truth may be his reward.

Man's share in the act of faith consists in following his 'implicit faith'. It consists in his willing response to his original orientation towards God. In this act, he restores the existential contact with God by submitting his will to God's will. Christ Himself has set the example in His earthly life.

A great fear of even the slightest form of self-determination is typical of Keble's personality. He thought man should never take the management of his soul into his own hands. On the contrary, he should 'firmly and humbly purpose to do and suffer all that God may clearly reveal to be His will' ¹⁷). By the example of Christ, God's will can only be done by following the way of the Cross, our participation in Christ being the only efficient cause to make His merits available to us. For this reason Keble called dutifulness, humility and obedience the three virtues constituting the right frame of mind. They mark the presence of Christ in a Christian. But, as he worked out in one of his parochial sermons while commenting on Christ's visit to Lazarus and his sisters, not one of these three virtues must be wanting. If there is only dutifulness

¹⁶) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, Preface, p. xliii.

¹⁷) *id.*, pp. ii, iii.

(Martha), the world will insensibly encroach on religion; if there is only humble devotion (Mary), there will be the danger that prayer and meditation degenerate into something dreamy and unreal¹⁸). When practising the three virtues together, men will know by 'a sort of heavenly instinct' what God would have them do and what they should leave undone. Thus, their mind and temper will be determined by one fundamental principle, the desire to please God in everything, which is the one and only purpose in life. According to Keble, everything else is selfishness, 'seeking one's own comfort'¹⁹).

In Keble's idea of God, both Old and New Testament elements can be distinguished. For those who fulfil God's will, Christ is a brother and a friend, but as soon as man shows his self-will, he calls down 'the Lord's indignation' upon him. Perplexity and uncertainty, doubt and misgivings in religious matters are tokens of His indignation. They should be recognized as warnings to 'an acute mind . . . against too much use of its own argumentative powers; to a practical mind against trusting the good which it thinks it has actually done; to a sensitive mind against its own apparent experiences of improvement or consolation'²⁰).

From Keble's standpoint in regard to the attainment of knowledge it follows that he thought it absolutely impossible for any one to make out on intellectual grounds whether the Church of England is a living branch of the Church Universal, or to come to a decision whether the Anglican Church or Rome is right. Such problems are purely practical. That was the reason why he never felt called upon to make a penetrating study of the points at issue between Rome and Anglicanism. He knew beforehand that such studies could only result into doubts. In 1844 he wrote to Coleridge, "Intellectually I fear I should be myself in a state of doubt, were I to give my mind to that controversy, but such doubts as, according to the principles of Butler, would make it my duty to stay where I am"²¹). Keble elaborated these principles in his *Preface* to the *Sermons Academical and Occasional*. He entitled this treatise 'The present position of English Churchmen', and it was written to alleviate the uneasiness in the minds of all Anglicans who were alarmed by the examples of the increasing numbers of persons who followed Newman to Rome. Butler's leading ideas form the starting-point in Keble's chain of reasoning. He summarized them in the following three points: —

¹⁸) *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. ix, s. 28, pp. 306, 307.

¹⁹) *id.*, s. 14, p. 143.

²⁰) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, s. xii, p. 307.

²¹) J. T. COLERIDGE, *op. cit.*, p. 304.

1. The 'safer way' is always to be preferred in practical matters of eternal import, even though the excess of seeming evidence may tell in any degree on the opposite side.

2. In estimating theological statements no account need be taken of objections, if these objections apply equally to acknowledged facts in God's natural and moral government as they do to the questions in dispute.

3. Any positive analogies to actual experience which we may be enabled to point out, may reasonably tell towards confirming our faith in a system which has stood the two former tests ²²).

Keble's serene confidence in God's guidance balanced his fear of self-determination. This may be illustrated by the following examples. During the period when there could no longer be any doubt about it that Newman was going to leave the Anglican communion, Keble often complained that he was 'fearfully cold about it', or that he wished 'he felt the distress more keenly' ²³). At an earlier date, he had already had his 'grand swallow of pain', when about the middle of 1843 he received a long letter from Newman. At the time he had 'retired into a deserted old chalk pit to read it', and much later he confessed to Newman, "I cannot tell you with what sort of fancy I look at the place now" ²⁴). It is difficult to account for this coldness at the time of the 'thunderbolt', unless one applies to it the following passage in one of Keble's letters to J. T. Coleridge: "Nothing could justify one's quitting one's communion except a long, deliberate, unwilling conviction, forced on one's heart and conscience, as well as intellect, that the Church of England was incurably fallen from being a Church" ²⁵). Who else would ever be able to force such a conviction on a person but God Himself? Keble must have believed that this conviction had indeed been forced on Newman by God. In the letter he wrote to Newman immediately after he had received the news of the latter's conversion, there is an indication which strengthens this supposition. His friend's crisis almost coincided with a very serious illness of Keble's wife and of his brother Thomas. Keble was sure that they were both going to die. His experiences at the two sick-beds convinced him that Anglicans could not possibly be 'aliens to the grace of God's Sacraments'. Referring to these

²²) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, Preface, pp. vi, vii.

²³) *Correspondence*, Birmingham Oratory, p. 261.

²⁴) *id.*, p. 308.

²⁵) J. T. COLERIDGE, *op. cit.*, p. 301.

experiences, he wrote to Newman, "Everything has fallen out so as to foster the delusion, if delusion it be, that we are not quite aliens, not living among unrealities. Yet you have no doubt the other way. It is very mysterious, very bewildering indeed; but, being so, one's duty seems clearly pointed out: to abide where one is, till some new call come upon one" ²⁶). Apparently, he thought the illness of his wife and his brother was a possible call from God, a test of his confidence in the Church of England. His confidence had proved to be unshaken. He accepted what Butler had taught him, that for a faithful Christian there were only probabilities to go on. His idea that the Anglican communion was a real Church might be a delusion, but it was not for him to dispel it. His only duty was to wait in uncertainty, though without doubting.

The choice between the Anglican Church and Rome was a practical, a 'moral' problem to Keble. As such, it could only be solved by letting the moral sense determine which was the 'safer way' ²⁷). If a Christian of the Church of England was ever put to the choice, he should ask himself which decision was more 'in unison' with the following moral tests:

1. *Contentment*. According to Keble, everybody may rest assured that it is right to say 'In whatever state you are, therewith be content', until one discerns 'unequivocal manifestations of God's will calling you out of it'.

2. *Intellectual modesty*. The question whether one is to stay in one branch of the Church Universal or go over to another requires a 'wise self-distrust'. This is 'a temper so suitable to us and our condition, that whatever course implies most of it has so far a presumption in its favour'.

3. *Contrition*, which is 'the temper of mind' to which we are turned by grace. Keble called 'the inclination to magnify rather than extenuate our faults' a mode of thinking which is favoured most by Providence.

4. *Love of sanctity in others*. The act of persons leaving their own Church for another was to be regarded not only as 'an outrage on natural piety and affection, an ungrateful rejection of the method by which divine Mercy has fed them all their life long until this day', but people should not forget, that it also 'brings with it something profane and sacrilegious akin to denying the grace of God in His Sacraments;

²⁶) *Correspondence*, Birmingham Oratory, p. 385.

²⁷) It is unnecessary to say that this point of view is unacceptable to a Catholic.

making out *that* to be human and ordinary, which was the work of the Holy Ghost'. Keble therefore advised such persons as were faced with this temptation, to stimulate in themselves a great love and zeal for the holiness which they were able to see in their fellow men, and to shrink from everything that might tend to disparage this sanctity.

5. *Fear of giving offence.* He called the probability of causing scandal a 'most unquestionable element of right decision in all practical matters'. In order to leave not the slightest doubt about the import of this 'moral test' he added, "No personal interest, not even the most immediate peril of his own soul, can exempt a Christian from the necessity of attending to the effect of his behaviour on others" ²⁸).

Keble felt that, by leaving the Church of England, he would show that he denied or depreciated the reality of the sanctity of his wife and brother. He would give offence by denying that they were members of the Body of Christ. He would reject the methods by which God had guided them. Their practical examples, while on the point of death, were of far greater value to him than a great many intellectual arguments ²⁹).

It was his firm belief that the Church of England had always remained comparatively unaffected by such doctrinal and ecclesiastical views as tended to undermine its adherence to the Ancient Church.

I do not see it as my present task to decide whether Keble's grounds for such a belief were sufficient or not. He looked at all problems from what people then began to call an Anglo-Catholic point of view. Anglo-Catholicism, however, must not be identified with Anglicanism. If Keble appears to have done so, it was mainly because he saw his Church threatened by ultra-Protestantism or Rationalism. His chief aim, in everything he did, was to prove that the Anglo-Catholic point of view had never been lost sight of in the history of the Church of England. Naturally, this caused him to regard everything connected with the Reformation with suspicion, or at least with great reserve. The measured terms in which he expressed himself about the English Reformers towards the end of his life are in striking contrast with the forcible expressions he used on the same subject in the preface to the second volume of Froude's *Remains*. In 1858 he wrote, "We would not be thought to disparage the Reformers, if we speak occasionally of defects

²⁸) cf. KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, Preface, pp. xxii-xxv.

²⁹) cf. *Correspondence*, Birmingham Oratory, pp. 384 ff.

or infirmities in them or their works" ³⁰). Some twenty years earlier, he had thought it necessary to disturb the favourable view of those who argued that the English Reformers were neither rationalists in their school of doctrine, nor Erastians in their ecclesiastical policy ³¹).

However different Keble's emotional reactions may have been, it is beyond any doubt that he fully agreed with Froude that 'the persons chiefly instrumental in the Reformation, the English Reformers included, were not as a party to be trusted on ecclesiastical and theological questions' ³²). He thought it was necessary to state this very definitely, because 'the defenders of low views within the Church and the assailants of her independence from without constantly appeal to the precedents and sanctions of the time of the Reformation' ³³). He knew very well what the consequences would be if the Church of England came to be identified with the Reformers; Anglicans might either follow the Reformers into 'the wrong kind of Protestantism', or they might react against them and forsake the Church of England. The only way to guard them against either error was to return to the Ancient Church. There lay the only *via media* between the accretions of the Church of Rome and the mutilations of extreme Protestantism. The greatest difficulty was to make his fellow-Churchmen see that opposing ultra-Protestantism did not imply favouring Rome. The Ancient Church was by no means to be considered identical with the Church of Rome.

He wanted people to understand that it is the essential and fundamental principle of the Universal Church, in contra-distinction to that of ultra-Protestantism, that man's salvation is effected by supernatural grace administered by the Church in the Sacraments. The Church was to him the Mystical Body of Christ, a supernatural reality ontologically different from natural reality, though realized in it.

The Reformation had contested this principle by denying or calling in question such points as Apostolical Succession, sacramental grace, the power of the keys, the sacredness of the ancient discipline, rites and ceremonies, the memory of Saints, fasting, celibacy, religious vows, voluntary retirement and contemplation ³⁴).

Keble accused the English Reformers of excessive nationalism. He

³⁰) KEBLE, *Considerations suggested by a late Pastoral Letter*, included in 3rd ed. of *On Eucharistical Adoration*, Oxford 1867, p. 249.

³¹) KEBLE, Preface to the second volume of FROUDE's *Remains*, pp. iv, v.

³²) id., p. xix.

³³) id., p. xix.

³⁴) id., p. xxviii.

admitted that the provocation of Rome had been great, especially during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, but it could not be denied, he thought, that 'those who resisted pride and usurpation became in their turn proud usurpers'. They must have forgotten the first law of Christ, the law of love and harmony, otherwise they would have found 'something to scruple at in a claim by any one national Church to be considered an integral whole in spiritual matters, excluding the intermeddling of any exterior person or persons to determine any doubt' ³⁵).

On the other hand, he was convinced that the theology of the Church of Rome was as little in unison with the principles of the Ancient Church, particularly as regards its ideas on development of doctrine, infallibility, indulgences, purgatory, and adoration of the Virgin Mary.

Under the circumstances, the Anglican Church would only be able to maintain its independence if it did not bind itself to the private opinions of any person or any school of thought. Anglicans should consider it their right and their duty to accept the fundamental truths of the Universal Church. Other points were to be interpreted in all essentials conformably to the doctrine and the ritual of the Church Universal. In cases of doubt, they had to submit to the authority of the Church in which God had placed them as long as there was no oecumenical Council to decide in such questions. By itself, no single branch of the Church Universal could oblige the other branches to accept one precise form of exterior worship and ecclesiastical policy.

Keble clearly saw a parallel between the Puritan controversy of the sixteenth century and the critical situation of the Church in his own age. His first object in re-editing Hooker's works was to inspire faithful Churchmen with hopeful feelings that God would interfere again, just as He had done in the sixteenth century. Then Hooker had been 'the chief human instrument in the salutary interference of divine Providence' ³⁶). Again the nucleus of the whole controversy was the question whether Church authority had been entrusted to the successors of the Apostles or to some other group of persons. In the period preceding Hooker, the Puritans had assigned it to a council of Presbyters, who held their commission 'not as an inward grace derived from our Lord by laying on of hands, but as an external prerogative granted (so they thought) by positive enactment of Holy Scripture' ³⁷).

³⁵) KEBLE, Review of GLADSTONE, *The State in its Relation with the Church*, in *British Critic and Quarterly Theological Review*, 1839, vol. xxvi, pp. 391, 392.

³⁶) KEBLE, Preface to the edition of Hooker's *Works*, p. lii.

³⁷) id., p. liii.

In the preface to his new edition of Hooker's works, Keble purposely inserted a summary of the development of the struggle with the Puritans to show his readers that it had always been the reality of sacramental grace which was the question at issue. He also stressed the disadvantages against which the defenders of the Church had to fight at the time. Whenever they ventured to insist on the exclusive claims of the successors of the Apostles, they were at once suspected of papistry, 'a taint so easily affixed, and so hard to shake off, wherever men demur to the extreme of what are denominated protestant opinions' ³⁸). Popular opinion had always mixed up the doctrine of Apostolical Succession with Rome.

Much had changed, however, when Hooker, patronized by Whitgift ³⁹), was writing his *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. "Men had been gradually unlearning some of those opinions, which intimacy with foreign Protestants had tended to foster, and had adopted a tone and a way of thinking more like that of the early Church . . ." ⁴⁰).

Hooker himself had started from a point 'not far short of what may be truly called extreme protestantism', but gradually he was 'impressed with the necessity of recurring in some instances to more definite, in others to higher views, to modes of thinking altogether more primitive than were generally entertained by the Protestants of that age'. Still speaking of Hooker, but at the same time stating his personal programme, Keble added, "He steadied the mind of the reformed Church against certain dangerous errors which the opinions of some early Reformers, too hastily adopted or carried too far, were sure to produce or encourage . . . He desired to shew Roman Catholics . . . that there might be something definite and primitive in a system of Church polity, though it disavowed the kind of unity on which they are taught exclusively to depend" ⁴¹).

Keble could not deny that, later on, quite a different interpretation was given of Hooker's writings. Yet he was convinced that Hooker had always started from the principles of the Ancient Church. He admitted that Hooker did not feel at liberty to use the principal argument of the Ancient Church, namely 'the necessity of the Apostolical commission to the derivation of sacramental grace, and to our mystical communion

³⁸) KEBLE, Preface to the edition of Hooker's *Works*, p. lviii.

³⁹) Archbishop Whitgift, 1583-1592. Among other things he is known for his *Defence against Cartwright*. Cartwright preferred the presbyterian system.

⁴⁰) KEBLE, Preface to the edition of Hooker's *Works*, p. lxx.

⁴¹) id., p. lxxviii.

with Christ' ⁴²). But Keble brought forward the excuse that to Hooker the writings of the early Fathers were hardly accessible, and the genuine remains of St. Ignatius not at all, for they had not yet been discovered.

In Keble's opinion, it was an incontestable fact that Hooker regarded the episcopal order as being of divine origin. He also fought against the theory which wanted to explain away the Communion of Saints, the instrumentality of sacramental signs in that communion, the necessity of 'the real, substantial Participation of Christ by His Saints' ⁴³). He strongly opposed the view that considered the Sacraments simply as 'expressive actions, or tokens, morally at most, but in no wise mystically conducive to the complete union of the renewed soul with God' ⁴⁴). He disavowed the Zwinglian notion that the Sacraments are only valid as moral aids to piety. He also disavowed the theory which denies the 'exclusive virtue of the Sacraments as ordinary means to their respective graces' ⁴⁵). He spoke with great reverence of every means of communion with the Church, such as the sign of the Cross and the imposition of hands. In the course of his own life, he bore continual witness to his deep sense of the importance of fasting. More or less indirectly 'he inculcates the momentous truth that a church is a place of solemn homage and sacrifice, not only, nor chiefly, a place of religious instruction; a place of supernatural even more than of moral blessing' ⁴⁶).

At the time of the Puritan controversy, Hooker had defended the catholicity of the Anglican Church. His writings were a strong proof and a comfort to all Anglicans that in the most critical periods of its history the Church of England had always had its providentially selected defenders.

If, however, everybody was to stay in the religious communion in which God had placed them, was not truth thereby sacrificed to peace? What chance was there of healing the divisions in the Church Universal? Of course, such questions forced themselves on Keble's mind. The answer he gave in the *Preface* to the *Academical and Occasional Sermons* was that, humanly speaking, the hope of Church union would become larger if the principles of the Anglican Church were more generally accepted. What gave this Church an indisputable right to claim the name of the most faithful continuator of the early Church was its loyal and constant

⁴²) KEBLE, Preface to the edition of Hooker's *Works*, p. lxxvii.

⁴³) id., p. lxxxiv.

⁴⁴) id., p. lxxxiv.

⁴⁵) id., p. lxxxv.

⁴⁶) id., p. xcvi.

reference to primitive Antiquity⁴⁷). Wherever the judgement of the Holy Catholic Church could be fairly and probably ascertained, the English Church had always made this judgement the rule for its practice in holy things as well as for its interpretation of holy words⁴⁸). The same could not possibly be said of the other Churches.

Keble found some kind of classification of the most important religions in the well-known passage in St. John's Gospel, "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came into His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He the privilege of becoming sons of God". The persons who do not know Christ are the heathens and the unbelievers, those who do not receive Him are the Jews, Mahometans and heretics, those who do receive Him are the Christians. What is exacted from the various groups respectively in conforming to the Church of England?

Keble dealt with this question in a rather naive and oversimplified way. Perhaps it was the uncertainty caused by Newman's conversion that made him cling to his idea of the Church of England with all the more desperate tenacity. The whole situation may have stimulated the desire to set off the orthodoxy of Anglicanism to the greatest possible advantage. However that may be, his considerations provide us with another illustration of how he applied the five moral tests⁴⁹).

To the first category, the heathens and unbelievers, the principle of the 'safer way' is at once applicable, he thought, for in joining the Church of England, they give up nothing and they have a chance of gaining eternal happiness. Neither are the Jews, the Mahometans and the heretics required to give up anything. They only have to add several things to what they possess already. The Jews, who are still looking forward to the coming of Christ, must believe that He has already come. Mahometans and Unitarians have to believe in the divine nature of Christ. Rationalists have to believe in man's mystical communion with Him. In all these points Keble simply supposed the mass of evidence to be so overpowering that all moral difficulties could be overcome. Such people need not rely upon their own reasoning as Englishmen would have to do in going over to Rome. The miracles which Christ worked, the sufferings He underwent, the doctrinal and sacra-

⁴⁷) KEBLE, *Considerations suggested by a late Pastoral Letter*, included in 3rd edition of *On Eucharistical Adoration*, Oxford 1867, p. 191.

⁴⁸) cf. *Serm. Chr. Year*, vol. viii, s. 38, pp. 399-401.

⁴⁹) see pp. 164, 165 of this essay.

mental systems on account of which He did and suffered all, all these points were so evident and indisputable to him, that acquiescence in them did not mean reliance on one's personal reasoning, but simply submission of one's understanding. Indeed, submission must have been so much of a second nature with Keble, that he could not imagine the difficulty of it for others.

Referring to another moral test, Keble pointed out that conversion from any form of Rationalism to the Church of England need not bring with it any check of contrition. He supposed it might be a relief for a rationalist — and it is clear that he took the term as synonymous with puritan — to be told that his membership of the Church had been so far but imaginary. The same holds good, he thought, as to the degree in which such a person separates himself from good men in his former communion and disparages their goodness by leaving them. A Puritan understands goodness to be a special token from God's sanctifying spirit, vouchsafed to him upon his personal act of believing in Christ as his Saviour. He does not understand it, as he would have done if he had been a Catholic, as the 'regular fruit of the free unspeakable Gift, vouchsafed in Baptism on his being made a member of Christ; the work not so much of the believer himself as of Christ abiding in him'. So, Keble concluded, in joining the Church from any 'Protestant' body, a man does not give up the claim of sacramental and supernatural holiness on the part of the communion which he leaves, because there never was such a claim.

As to the third category, the [Roman] Catholics, Keble's standpoint was that no sacrifice of principles is required, because the three branches of the Church Universal have all started from the same principles. Of course, certain statements of facts and applications of principles would have to be withdrawn or modified. In Keble's opinion, it was of the greatest importance that no member of the Roman and Greek branches would have to contradict anything of what has been accepted as an axiom by believers from time immemorial. Consequently, he thought that the providential call on such persons to consider where they are and why they are there, became all the more direct, and the possible sacrifice all the more worth making. He admitted that it must be a 'very awful and momentous proceeding' for a [Roman] Catholic to conform to the Anglican Church, but he was convinced that it would be 'far less painful and responsible' than the act of an Anglican conforming to Rome, because the act of the [Roman] Catholic would 'involve less of an anathema on the communion he separated from'.

As regards Dissenters, Keble supposed that their moral obligations to change were less strong than those of [Roman] Catholics, but the positive reasons to change were, on the other hand, far more powerful in their case. If they wanted to hold their own, Dissenters had to deny the very first axiom of the English Church, 'Universal consent among Christians is moral demonstration'. If, however, they accepted this axiom, it told so unquestionably for a visible Church, for sacramental grace, for government by successors of the Apostles, that it would overrule all moral difficulties that might stand in their way ⁵⁰).

→ Keble often compared the situation of the divided Church to that of a divided family, in which 'relationship continues, while intercourse is interrupted'. He always had Church union very much at heart. In spite of the naive impression he may make in the preceding paragraphs, he was no doubt fully aware that all the problems involved were very delicate. He realized that the various points at issue touched the most sacred truths so intimately that he thought he could not do better than recommend the most guarded and respectful thoughts and words in connection with them. It was his *via pacis* never to insist upon outward communion, but rather to pray for all non-Anglicans, to acquiesce patiently in the 'sentence of partial excommunication', to accept the 'unity of faith and not of sight' as best suited to man's fallen condition.

We shall now conclude this chapter with Keble's paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer, occurring at the end of the *Preface* to his *Academical and Occasional Sermons*. It leaves no doubt about his longing for unity.

"Our Father, which art in Heaven, One God the Father Almighty, One Lord Jesus Christ, One Holy Ghost proceeding from the Father and the Son; have mercy upon us, Thy children, and make us all one in Thee. — Hallowed be Thy name: Thou who art One Lord, and Thy Name one; have mercy upon us all, who are called by Thy Name, and make us more and more one in Thee. — Thy Kingdom come: O King of Righteousness and Peace, gather us more and more into Thy Kingdom, and make us both visibly and invisibly one in Thee. — Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven: Thou who hast declared unto us the mystery of Thy will, to gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven and which are on earth; conform us, O Lord, to that holy will of Thine, and make us all one in Thee. — Give us this day our daily Bread: Thou in whom we being many, are one Bread and one Body: grant that we, being all partakers of that one

⁵⁰) KEBLE, *Serm. Ac. & Occ.*, Preface, pp. lvi ff.

Bread, may day by day be more and more one in Thee. — And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us: Thou who didst say, 'Father, forgive them', for those who were rending Thy Blessed Body: forgive us the many things we have done to mar the unity of Thy Mystical Body, and make us, forgiving and loving one another, to be more and more one in Thee. — And lead us not into temptation: As Thou didst enable Thine Apostles to continue with Thee in Thy temptations: so enable us by Thy grace to abide with Thee in Thy true Church under all trials, visible and invisible, nor ever to cease from being one in Thee. — But deliver us from evil: From the enemy and false accuser: from envy and grudging: from an unquiet and discontented spirit: from heresy and schism: from strife and debate: from a scornful temper, and reliance on our own understanding: from offence given or taken; and from whatever might disturb Thy Church, and cause it to be less one in Thee: Good Lord, deliver and preserve Thy servants for ever”.

CONCLUSION

In the preceding chapters I have tried to qualify Keble's share in the Oxford Movement by working out the fundamental ideas which determined his attitude to life. It was the way in which these ideas found expression in everything he did, that made Keble the stimulating personality which he is generally admitted to have been.

He realized that rationalism had been undermining faith especially in the fields of anthropology and epistemology. The defence of faith therefore required a reorientation of man's place in the world, and also, closely connected with this problem, a reconsideration of the validity of the knowledge attainable by man. The question at issue was the relation between the individual and the universe.

One of the most serious obstacles the Oxford men found in their way was the fact that, owing to the spirit of the age, a great many people attached little or no religious importance to the question of what chiefly determines man's place in the world. The greatest problem was how to make people see again that man is a transcendental being whose place in the world can consequently be determined only by his relation to his Creator. Keble thought it was therefore of primary importance to impress upon his contemporaries the unity of all reality in Christ.

Due to its one-sided concentration on visible reality, rationalism had disturbed this unity in its various aspects. It had caused a cleavage in the relationship of the individual and the universe by placing man over against, instead of in, his natural surroundings, so that life could no longer be experienced as a unity. Its overestimation of human reason implied an underestimation of the feelings, emotions and affections, apart from the fact that it ignored the consequences of original sin in man's nature. The most fatal results of all this were the denial of the mysterious element in life and the dissociation of thinking and living.

The disintegrating influences of rationalism on man's outlook on life were, in Keble's opinion, the chief cause of the predicament in which religion and the Church of England found themselves. With the other Oxford leaders, Keble was convinced that a radical change in this dangerous situation could only be brought about by a return to the spirit and the way of thinking of the Ancient Church which was characterized by a totally different approach to nature. For the early Fathers, reality

formed an all-comprising unity which presented itself to man under a natural and a supernatural aspect. Inspired by his studies of the Bible and the Fathers, particularly the Alexandrian school, Keble had come to the conclusion that the functional value of the course of nature could not possibly be appreciated unless natural phenomena were considered as symbols of supernatural realities. Symbolic transmutation was to him an activity far more typical of the human mind than logical reasoning. His biblical and patristic studies had taught him that it was in accordance with God's plan that man's innate feelings of love and fear of God should be the foundation of his ethical interests. He saw very clearly that such feelings, indicative as they are of man's dependence on God, have the power to actuate the symbolizing disposition of the human understanding in its search and acquisition of knowledge. As appeared from the Bible and the early Fathers, symbolic thinking was superior to logical reasoning as a source of real knowledge because it enabled man to achieve participation in supernatural reality through natural reality. There was left no doubt about the place of natural reality in God's economy.

The testimonies of the Fathers were corroborated by Butler's analogical reasoning and by the metaphysical views of early romantic poets like Wordsworth and Coleridge. To them Keble was greatly indebted for his ideas about the attainment of knowledge.

From Butler Keble had learned the following principles: the interrelation of man and his natural surroundings is the source of all real knowledge; there is a close correspondence or analogous relation between the natural and the moral world, so that knowledge obtained in connection with the former is applicable to the latter; originally man was endowed with such faculties as enabled him to promote his temporal and eternal happiness; man's natural fitness to act in accordance with God's will was disturbed by sin but restored by Christ; if man's faculties are constantly controlled by his 'moral sense', he is again able to do God's will.

Whereas Butler's concern with reality was primarily speculative and rational, the early romantic poets approached the problem much more psychologically. They were interested in the unconscious processes of cognition and creation and their effects upon the conscious mind. Influenced by Kant, they made the imagination the bridge to span the gulf between the individual and the universe. In their opinion, the imagination was the faculty that transmuted man's impressions of the external world. It ordered and synthesized man's visual experience by

means of its associative working. They called this its healing function, because it restored the harmonious unity between man and his surroundings.

Keble thought he might be able to guide his unbelieving contemporaries to the religious symbolism of the Ancient Church by elaborating his theory of poetry on the basis of the analogy between poetry and religion. Combining Butler's principles and the metaphysical views of the romantic poets, he tried to convey to his contemporaries some notion of the relation between natural and supernatural reality. In its essential quality, its 'healing function', poetry might be used as a 'prelude to religion' or as 'the handmaid of religion'. It might deepen man's insight into the workings of sacramental grace. The poet chooses some object in nature and charges it with his most intimate thoughts and feelings with a view to relieving his mental and emotional strain. In this way, poetry enables him simultaneously to express and to conceal his overwhelming emotions. If the reader wants to participate in the poet's emotions, he must approach the particular natural object as a symbol of the poet's emotions and apprehend it with his own imagination. In His economy God has selected natural objects, the outward parts of the Sacraments, as channels of His grace. If a Christian wants to participate in God's grace, he must approach these objects with faith.

The term 'moral sense' had for Keble a wider meaning than it had for Butler. It represented man's whole personality in its relation to natural reality and through natural to supernatural reality. It comprised the feelings, the affections, the conscience, the analogical or imaginative sense as well as reason. When he called it an instinct, he meant to suggest that it represents the spontaneous concrete functioning of man's whole personality as it is directed towards God. It is the regenerated form of man's common sense. This regeneration, brought about in Baptism, is a radical change of an ontological nature, for it places man in a renewed relation to supernatural reality, which, through Christ's redemption, has become part of our natural reality in the shape of sacramental symbols.

Keble's vindication of the reality of sacramental grace is his chief contribution to the Oxford Movement.

Faith is prerequisite for the reception of sacramental grace. Keble called faith 'the free and unspeakable gift of God', but viewed from man's point of view, he qualified it as an act in which man has to cooperate with God, not once for all but again and again, by the voluntary submission of his will to God's will. The act of faith was to Keble of an existential character. Submission of the will was to him *the*

factor which determines the right understanding of reality. He postulated this right understanding of reality as the criterion in distinguishing believers from unbelievers. There were to him only two systems in the world of religion: the Catholic system, 'grounded in faith', and the 'Protestant' system, 'grounded in self-will'.

He endeavoured to impress upon his fellow-Churchmen that the Sacraments are the summit of faith because participation in Christ is the final object of faith. In a period when 'protestantizing' influences in the Anglican Church tended to make it into a creation of the human mind and a servant of the State, he brought out in full relief that for her catholicity the Church of England is entirely dependent on her being the distributor of sacramental grace. In the very first tract that he contributed to the Oxford Movement he defended Apostolical Succession as the indispensable safeguard of the integrity of the Sacraments, and the Sacraments in their turn as the safeguards of the integrity of the fundamental doctrines. Keble always gave more prominence to the fact that the Church is the continuation of Christ's work of redemption than that it is the continuation of Christ's teaching. He made sacramental grace the central point in his theory of Church unity. He trusted that sacramental unity of the Church would ultimately result in the restoration of visible unity. Grace was of primary importance to Keble because he was convinced that the change which it effects in human nature is of an ontological, not merely of an ethical, character.

Though Keble's conception of grace is evidently Catholic, due consideration shows beyond any doubt that in his manner of acting, feeling and thinking he belonged to the Reformation. If the term is rightly interpreted, he would not have denied that himself. He would not have the Church of England identified either with any extreme kind of Protestantism or with Romanism. The only safe way to guard his Church against either error was to return to the spirit of the Ancient Church. This Church was to him the Mystical Body of Christ, a reality of a mystical order, revealed in and by Christ, manifested in, but at the same time separated from, the natural order of things in which unbelievers live.

Natural reality did not serve any other purpose to him than of being the symbolic approach to the supernatural. Quite consistently, the world of science and material progress represented to him the outcome of man's illusion of autonomy and self-sufficiency. It is necessary to remember that Keble lived in a period when applied science was bringing about the so-called Industrial Revolution, causing radical changes in the mental,

social, economic and religious situation of the time. Owing to his consciousness of the effects of material progress on the religious life, he went to the other extreme. He underrated the value of man's success in worldly matters, and maintained that it was not at all man's task to subject the world to the power of the human will. He suspected that such ideas had been devised by man to make God superfluous and to release himself from his obligation to obey God.

Keble's vivid sense of mystery found a natural basis in his awareness of the phenomenal character of experience. Following in the steps of Butler and the early romantic poets, he pointed to the analogy between the function of the imagination and that of faith. It was the function of imaginative poetry to restore the unified experience of life. It was the function of faith to restore and continue man's communion with Christ. What the natural object means for the poet on a natural level, that is the meaning of the Sacraments for the believer on a supernatural level.

The realization of objective unity was Keble's central problem. It is still the central problem. May not his view of the sacramental unity of all Christians contain an oecumenical message for our own times?

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- 1812 Two prize essays, the English essay on *Translation from dead languages*, the Latin essay on *A comparison between Xenophon and Julius Caesar as military historians*.
- 1814 Review of COPLESTON'S *Praelectiones Academicæ*, in *British Critic* (reprinted in *Occasional Papers and Reviews*, Oxford 1877).
- 1817(?) Review of J. MILLER'S *Bampton Lectures* (first publ. in *Occasional Papers and Reviews*, Oxford 1877).
- 1825 An article on "Sacred Poetry" in *Quarterly Review*.
- 1827 *The Christian Year*, publ. anonymously, 2 vols.; 2nd. ed. 1827, 3rd ed. 1828 *).
- 1829 *Six queries by John Keble, tending to oppose Mr. Peel's candidature to represent the University of Oxford*.
- 1831 'A hint from Bristol', a plea against Reform, (anon.).
- 1833 *National Apostasy*, considered in a sermon preached in St. Mary's, Oxford, before Her Majesty's Judges of Assize on July 14.
- 1833 Contributions to *Tracts for the Times*: no. 4. *Adherence to the Apostolical Succession the safest course*; no. 13. *Sunday Lessons, the principle of selection* (no. 13 reprinted by J. Parker, 1867).
- 1834 *Ode for the Encænia at Oxford* in honour of His Grace, Arthur, Duke of Wellington, Chancellor of the University of Oxford (printed in *Oxford Prize Poems*, 1839).
- 1834 Contributions to *Lyra Apostolica* (46 poems).
- 1834 Contribution to *Tracts for the Times*: no. 40. *Richard Nelson III*.
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*) It may be interesting to insert here the following facts as to the number of editions and copies issued, from the first publication of the *Christian Year* till the expiration of the copyright. (cf. PUSEY'S preface to *Occasional Papers and Reviews*.)

	Editions	Total copies
From 1827 to the end of 1837	— 16	— 26,500
From 1838 to the end of 1847	— 14	— 39,000
From 1848 to the end of 1857	— 19	— 63,000
From 1858 to the end of 1867	— 60	— 119,500
From 1868 to April 1873	— 31	— 57,500
Total	140	305,500

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- 1839 *The Creweian oration at the Oxford Encænna*, on which occasion an honorary degree was conferred on Wordsworth.
- 1840(?) Contribution to the *Tracts for the Times*: no. 89. *On the Mysticism attributed to the Early Fathers of the Church* (repr. in 1868, J. Parker).
- 1841 *The case of Catholic subscription to the 39 Articles considered in reference to Tract 90*. A letter to the Hon. Mr. Justice Coleridge. Privately printed. Published 1865.
- 1841 Edition of *The Child's Christian Year: Hymns for every Sunday and Holy-day*.
- 1841 Review of F. KILVERT's *A selection from unpublished papers of the Right Rev. William Warburton, D.D.* for the *British Critic* (repr. in *Occasional Papers and Reviews*, 1877).
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- 1845 *Three sermons* (no. 4-6) in Sermons preached at St. Saviour's, Leeds.
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- 1849 *Against profane dealing with Holy Matrimony in regard of a man and his wife's sister*. A tract for English Churchmen and Churchwomen.
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- 1851 *A pastoral letter to the parishioners of Hursley; occasioned by the proposed synodical meeting in the diocese of Exeter* (repr. with preface by H. P. Liddon, 1st and 2nd ed., J. Parker).
- 1851 An article on the *Synod of Exeter*, in the *Christian Remembrancer* (reprinted in *Occasional Papers and Reviews*, 1877).
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- 1854 *A few very plain thoughts on the proposed admission of Dissenters to the University of Oxford* (A. A. Masson, Oxford).
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- 1863 *Women labouring in the Lord*. A sermon preached at Wantage (J. Parker, Oxford).
- 1863 Edition of *Life and Works of T. Wilson, D.D.*, Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology (Oxford).
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- 1864 *Pentecostal Fear*. A sermon preached in the parish church of Cuddesdon (Oxford).
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